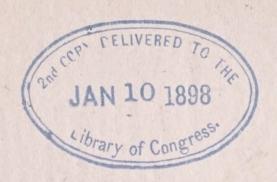
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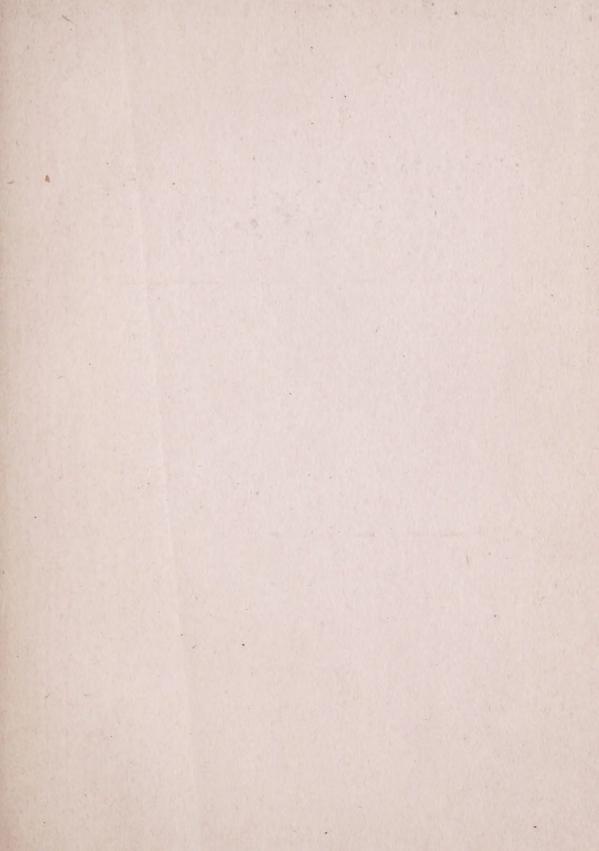
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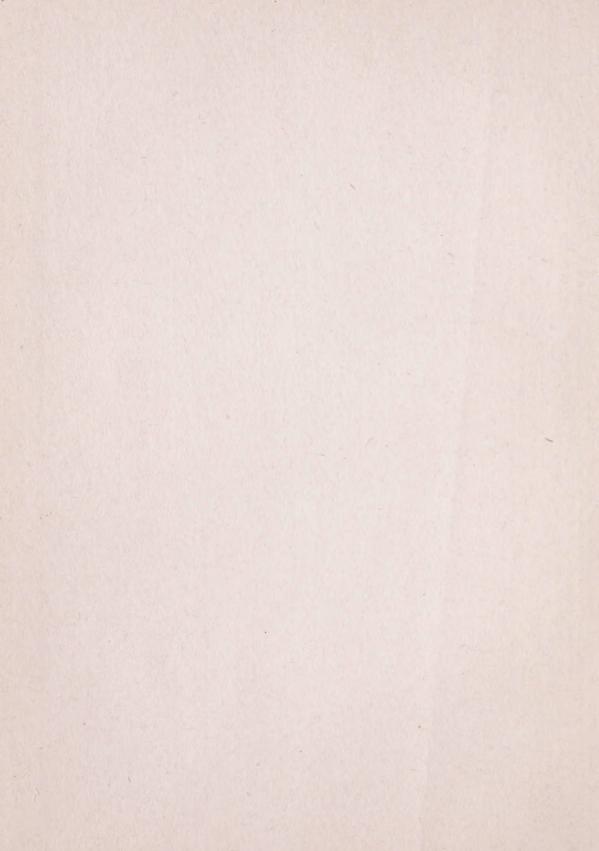


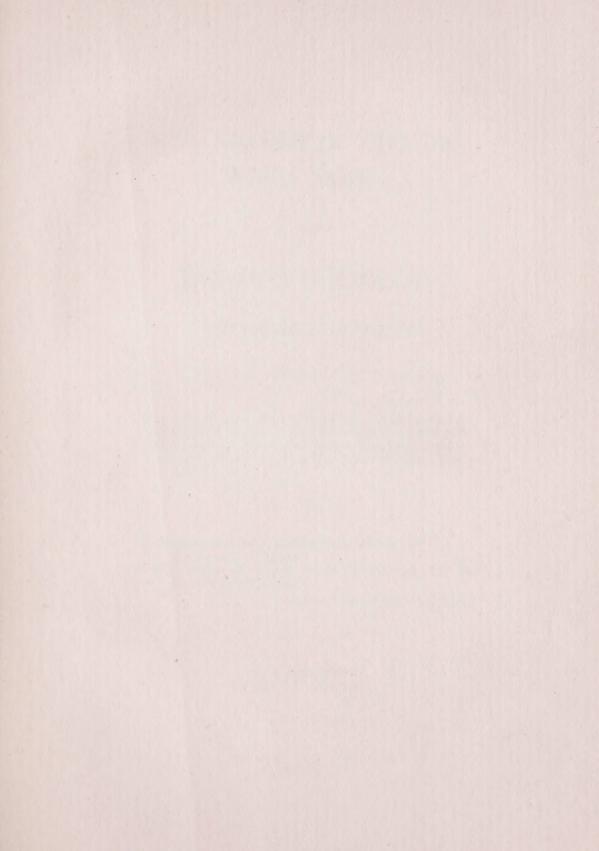
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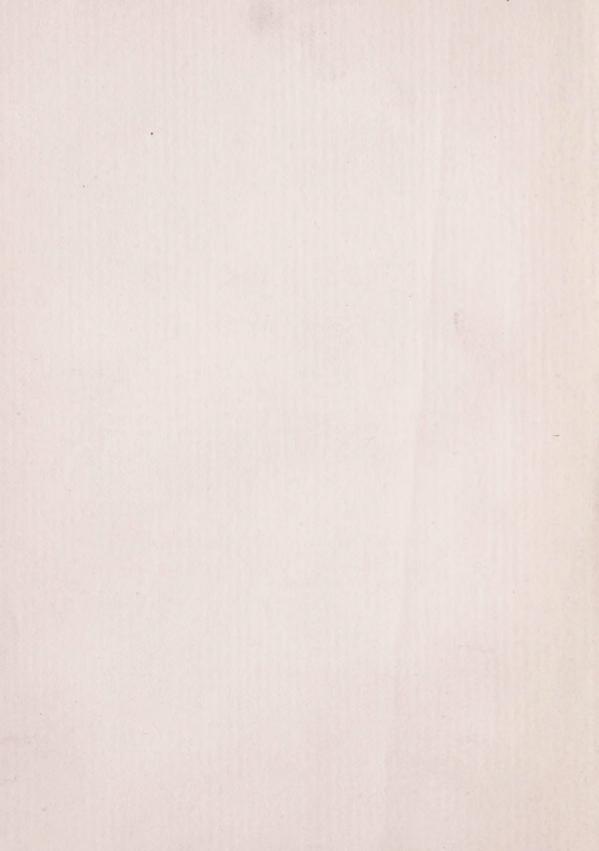
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









Aida Rocksbege and the White Stone.

TODAY'S PROBLEM,

A Presbyterial Romance

"Not myself, but the truth in life I have spoken.

Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown
I shall pass on to ages, all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have
done."

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side."

Lowell-"The Present Crisis."

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CALVERT BROS., Printers, Rockford, Ill.

TWO CAPTES RECEIVED

PZ3 PaziA 7/29

To the

PATRIOTIC DAUGHTERS

of Church and State

Is this simple story of an earnest life for country and for Christ

LOVINGLY TRANSCRIBED

by their loyal sisters of Freeport Presbyterial Home Missionary Society, Synod of Illinois.

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- I. Linn-Hebron Society,
 Mrs. Sue Froman Matthews.
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 - V. Ridgefield Society.
 Miss Lizzie Furney.
- VI. Freeport 2nd Church Society, Mrs. B. A. Arnold.
- VII. Cedarville Society,
 Miss Margaret Wright.
- VIII. Winnebago Society,
 M18. Parsons.
 - IX. Marengo Society,
 Mrs. Francis Wolloben.
 - X. Woodstock Society, Mrs. J. R. Hyde.
 - XI. Hanover Society, Miss Lizzie Arnold.
 - XII. Rockford 1st Church Society,
 Mrs. Hovey.
- XIII. Rockford Westminster Society, Miss Mary E. Holmes, Ph. D.

PREFACE.

Previous to the Fifteenth Annual meeting of the Presbyterial Home Missionary Society of Freeport Presbytery, Synod of Illinois, our president, Miss Mary E. Holmes, Ph. D., of Rockford, Ills., proposed to each local society that we celebrate our fifteenth birthday by writing a "composite missionary story," each society

to furnish a chapter.

The only specific directions were the time limit, 10 minutes for reading aloud; that no chapter was to be fully complete, but threads left for the next writer to carry forward; that throughout there should be a missionary trend and that each local society should choose its own representative writer. The Proposal was heartily accepted. No. I wrote and sent her manuscript to our President, who later passed it to She wrote and returned to No. 2. both manuscripts to our President who again passed them to No. 3, and so on. We are sorry the roll call of societies is not quite complete, but some begged off from work so untried by them, though in cordial sympathy with the movement.

Of the interest of our story and the ingenuity developed by the writers in presenting so largely a sketch from life—time, names and places being generally changed—the reader must judge, but of *our* pleasure and increased interest, each local society can testify.

May the happy experiences of unbroken and hearty service for our Country and our Lord, during these fifteen years, stimulate us and others to greater fidelity in the future-

Sweet is the reward of duty faithfully

performed,

THE AUXILIARY SOCIETIES.

CHAPTER I.

"God moves in a mysterious way."

his golden beams across the country scene, covering the fresh, green grass with a shimmer of light, painting the thrifty farmhouse in a deeper tint of orange, peering into the evergreens with a warm caress for the sleeping birds and laughing in the face of Alectryon, as he perched upon the fence to hail the god of day.

A long drove of Jersey and Holstein cows wended their way to the pasture field, and swift through the air sped the busy bee toward the southland, in search of the first clover patch, that, ere Phoebus could rein his steed behind the western woodland, they might return laden with milk and honey.

The proud gobbler strutted back and forth in the yard, and in threatening

tones, warned the intruder from following his companion to the hiding of her nest. The Poland-China pigs grunted in satisfaction over their well-filled stomachs and the gentle lambs gamboled in the early breeze.

There was an appearance of peace and plenty, of industry and economy, of beauty and happiness over all this hundred acres of an ideal farm. The quiet elegance of the dwelling, the space and cleanliness of the industrial buildings and the methodical execution of labor was indicative of the perfection of character, and strength of influence embodied in the educated farmer. Tall and straight, lithe and light, firmly built and strong of sinew, the owner of this place stood with one foot resting upon the step of the front entrance of his home, his right hand shading his deep blue eyes, as he gazed intently toward the east while the wind coyed with the light brown locks that fell about his intellectual forehead. Motionless he stood until the top of a carriage appeared over the little hill on Hamwok street. A glad smile displayed a mouth of matchless teeth. With a glance toward the parlor window, where, seated behind the plate glass was the mistress of his home and the mother of his boy, he joyfully exclaimed: "She's coming, Mary, dear; she is coming!" then hastened to the carriage block.

Mary Rocksbege remained seated at the window, but followed her husband with an expression on her souled face that only angels could interpret. She was the daughter of one of the North's gentlemen, a member of a large family where education along important lines of humanity, music and industry had been conscientiously inculcated. Possessing a deep, spiritual nature, broadened by the love of Christ, and made beautiful in active charity, there was no room in her heart for evil impulses, no time for unholy thoughts.

About a dozen years before, while on an excursion in the south, she had met Richard Rocksbege, who, accompanied by his little daughter of five summers, joined her party through the introduction of a distant friend and relative. A correspondence followed, and in less than two years the affaire d'amour was consummated, and the southern gentleman persuaded to part with the sunny south for the bright smiles of his northern bride—with the romantic home of his childhood for the practical beauties of a dairy farm.

This union had been blessed with the coming of one great-hearted, blue-eyed boy, the pride of his father and joy of his mother. The daughter, by a former alliance, had been sent to a boarding-school, and her father had strong hope of her brilliant success in the literary world. Very great was his disappointment, when, having finished her college course, she desired to become a missionary of the cross. The mountain whites engaged all her thoughts. Her father, believing it only temporary enthusiasm, consented to her taking a

school in the Cumberland mountains, at a desolate little hamlet known as Berhon Ridge. During the year that Aida Rocksbege lived in the mountains of Kentucky, her weekly letters were a constant pleasure and interest to her father. Her pictures of these mountaineers, their depravity and suffering, coupled with their innate loyalty to our country. and their natural grasp for some form of religion, opened to him visions of a higher Christian life, and an appreciation of his daughter's sacrifices. Her letters were prayerfully read in the home circle, and her little half-brother Ira carefully preserved them for the "Boys' Mission band," which he had helped to organize for the "mountain whites."

However, there came a day when a letter from Berhon Ridge brought consternation to the home in Hamwok street. Aida had given up her school of poor whites, and gone to N—, Mississippi, in the very heart of the colored people, there to spend and be spent for

the upbuilding of this long-neglected The letter was addresed to Ira. and as he read it aloud, there escaped from his father's lips an ejaculation of such unutterable sorrow that the boy dropped the letter, and could never be induced to listen to any reference to the dark race. The mother deeply sympathizing, bowed her head in prayer. There existed a union and confidence between father and daughter which she had never been permitted to share, and she was not surprised when Richard Rocksbege arose with pale, but resolute countenance declaring his intention to go south.

The journey was made, and father and daughter spent a memorable week together. When Richard Rocksbege returned, he was a changed man. He seemed overwhelmed with a deep sorrow—as one patiently submitting to the consequence of some unpardonable sin.

Aida's letters, full of enthusiastic accounts of her work at N—— continued to come. She often referred to the won-

derful power of music over the race. By her songs she could control an army of colored people. She would entrance them with the melody of song, then lead their souls to God in some grand old hymn. They almost always desired earnestly to be able to read the Word for themselves, and begged for more knowledge of the way. From each new grace implanted in their empty souls was born an impulse for good.

The father sought a retired place to read her letters alone, which strengthened Ira's determination to take no interest in them. They were, however, given to his little playmate and chum. Grace Harvey, who, in a spirit of zeal for the neglected cause, organized a "Girls' Mission band" to help Miss Aida in her new work.

Time glided by. At the end of two years, Richard Rocksbege received a telegram announcing the sudden return of his daughter. Ira met her at the station and soon drove with her into the yard. He sprang from the carriage.

dropping the top, and Aida was clasped in her father's arms. Her large, black, humid eyes looked into his with loving gratitude. Her jet black hair fell away from her forehead in glossy waves and was caught up in a braided coil. Her stately figure—5 feet 6 inches—was well formed; her countenance was beautiful, but there was in it an expression more of sadness than of joy. With rare accomplishments and strength of character, she could reign as queen in any cultured society; yet she had chosen to be ostracised by her equals, and jeered at by her inferiors. She had chosen it from a sense of duty, and to do her Master's will. Ira stood quietly in admiration of his handsome sister, while his mother came slowly forward to greet her. She would have embraced and kissed her, but Aida bowed low and left a kiss upon her hand, and Mrs. Rocksbege thought: "She is jealous of me still! Will I never succeed in winning her? in making her less cold and distant."

The father's countenance betrayed

sorrow, vexation and horror. Ira gathered the valises and lead the way to her room. Alone, Aida fell upon her knees, and later, arose with a cheerful face and joined the family in the parlor. She quickly gave an account of her trip—relating several amusing incidents for Ira's benefit, and his little friend Grace's —who always happened over when any event of interest was occurring.

After dinner, father and daughter sought the hammock, hung between two beautiful maple trees which seemed ever whispering to each other of the secrets told beneath their shade.

"Now, Aida," said Mr. Rocksbege, "tell me what brought you home so suddenly."

"I cannot tell you, Father."

"Cannot tell me! Have I ever kept a secret from you?"

"One secret you kept for years."

"Would to God I had kept it still."

"Sometimes I, too, wish it were so."

"I thought you were dying, dear, and in the hope of securing peace to my conscience, I revealed the fact to you," sadly spoke her father.

"Forgive me, dear Father, I do not wish to make you more sorrowful by my home-coming. It is best as it is. We should be glad at all times to know the truth."

"If the truth could make you free."

"I am free! Free as the birds of the air, and will remain free as an eagle on the wing. Yes, I have come home to say 'good-bye,' and then fly away to Africa. I can remain in the south no longer."

"Aida! Aida!" said Mr. Rocksbege, as he arose and stood before his daughter.

"Do not say me nay, dear Father. I must go."

"Why must you go? I let you work for the mountaineers because you believed his Spirit drew you there. I consented to your remaining among the colored people because the Macedonian cry was calling to you from among them. Is God's hand in this! to thus separate you from me by the great ocean!"

"I do not know, dear Father."

"You do not know? You had no doubts as to your former calls. Give me the advantage of this doubt, and do not leave our native land."

"I love my native land, and I was very happy in the south."

"Pray, why may you not continue happy there?"

"Not now."

"Do you rebel against the treatment of the aristocracy? the ostracism of society? I warned you of that when I went to see you."

"All that weighs only as a feather against the approbation of my Savior."

"Will you not tell me, Aida, whence any trouble has arisen?"

"Perhaps, but not now."

"You will not leave for a foreign field without enlightening me!"

"No, sir, for I must have your sanction and your blessing."

"Thank you, dear. Here comes Ira and Grace Harvey. I will leave you with them awhile.

"Aida," said both children in the same breath; "you will attend the meeting of our mission band, won't you?"

"Certainly; do you meet together?"

"No, no!" they replied contemptuously.

"Then I trust you meet at different homes."

"No, but you will meet with 'us,' " each child contended.

"If you do not hold your meetings too far apart, I may divide the time between you."

"I want you to tell us about mountain whites," said Ira.

"We want to learn more of your colored school," said Grace.

After considerable talking, the plans were all carried out to the satisfaction of both children.

Several days after the above, Aida, in the hammock, had read herself asleep. Two little birds in the tree were cooing and caressing each other as they occasionally peeked down at the slumberer, intent on a stray lock of glossy hair the wind seemed bent on carrying away, that they might secure it for their newly made nest. Three dainty gophers came across the path, and poised with forefeet aloft, stretched their necks to peer into the face of the beautiful girl. A serious squirrel leaped from limb to limb and chuckled to warn the sleeper of the approach of a stranger. But lulled to sleep by the gentle breeze and the peaceful atmosphere of the country home, the maid was not easily brought back from the land of dreams.

A young man of medium height, gracefully formed, with dark hair, a heavy moustache, large, earnest eyes, and a bearing which revealed that

"His life was gentle, and the elements So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world, 'This is a man,' "
rode into the yard, threw the rein of his
bridle over the hitching post, and seeing
the object of his search, soon stood beside the hammock and gazed into

"That face-

How beautiful! If sorrow had not made Sorrow more beautiful than beauty's self!"

Ira and Grace from the parlor window saw the stranger.

"Come," said Ira; "let's go and see what he wants. He might touch her."

"No, he won't," said Graice. "Isn't he handsome? Let's watch till Aida opens her eyes."

"No, come on," said Ira. "He will frighten her."

"Frightened at a man that looks as he does! That's all you know about girls."

"Oh, if a fellow is good looking, you don't think he can do anything wrong."

"Everybody that is good is good-looking. Mother says character shows as plainly as the nose on one's face."

"Look!" said Ira, "Aida has opened her eyes."

"Why don't she move?" asked Grace.
"She is looking straight at him," said
Ira. "She must be scared!"

"No, she is glad," persisted Grace.

"Then why don't they speak?" asked Ira. "See how white she is! There is a flush on her cheek and tears in her eyes. Come with me and find Mother. It must be some friend come to see Aida."

The children disappeared from the window. When Aida Rocksbege opened her eyes under the influence of Duane Leeland's strong gaze, she thought the vision was a continuation of her dream, and was loth to move and break the spell. When the silvery tones of his quiet voice spoke: "Miss Aida," the dewdrops sparkled in her eyes, and the roses suffused her cheeks. Some moments passed before she could arise and control her voice.

"Mr. Leeland, why are you here?" she asked.

"To see you in your father's home.
Am I not welcome?"

"You are welcome but you are not kind."

He seated himself in the hammock by her side, and with that straight-forward earnestness, peculiar to the southerner, spoke directly to the point.

"Dear Miss Aida, why will you not end all this unhappiness, and consent to become my wife? I have followed you north, hoping that under your father's influence you might be persuaded to yield to my desire."

"Go back to your home and your friends. I will not become your wife!" "And yet you love me," said Duane.

"You surprised me into that confession when the warm sun was coquetting with the solemn waters of the Mississippi."

"And the north wind has not cooled the flame?" asked Duane, gazing earnestly into her face.

"Kabibonokka has been less cruel than Shawandasee," she answered with a smile.

"I shall interpret you according to my liking. You are less cold under the influence of the fierce Kabibonokka than when the south wind

"'Once as he was gazing northward
Far away upon the prairie,
He beheld a maiden standing,
Saw a tall and slender maiden
All alone upon a prairie;
Day by day his heart within him
Grew more hot with love and longing.'"

"You can't continue," interrupted Aida, for he was not 'too indolent and lazy to pursue her, and—" "she hesitated, when Duane completed the quotation, "persuade her."

He threw his whole soul into those last two words, but she turned from him and in serious accents said: "I have consecrated my life to the blessed Master. For his suffering people it shall be spent."

"We can spend our lives together for Him. I will join you in your school and live with you among the Negroes. Devote all my time and fortune to them, and count it sweetest joy for being with you."

'The contempt of your family, the scoffs of your companions, the ill-treatment of all your former friends would soon tell upon your happiness."

"I have foresworn them already. I have told my parents that I was going north to seek and to marry the teacher of our colored school. I received their parting curse, and have left my home

forever—unless I return to the vicinity with you as my bride."

"You are a brave man."

"I have nothing more to lose. I have joyfully sacrificed all for you. You cannot continue to refuse to make me happy."

"I value you too highly to do other than to refuse."

"I cannot understand you. Were your leve like mine, you could not live without me."

"It is because my love for you is deeper, more lasting and more unselfish. It is the sweetest stay of my life that I have known you, and in heaven, when we meet in spirit, pure and white, meet as equals, you may claim me as your own."

"We can never be equals," said Duane Leeland, while the blood rushed to Aida's face. "You are as superior to me as the angels of heaven."

"Among the redeemed I trust we will be equal. If labor and consecration to our Savior's blessed mission work will lift me to a higher plane in the here-

after, you may hope to find me there."

"Then I must not be behind you in the work. Where shall I go? What can I do? May I aspire to anything worthy in the great cause that has taken you from me? Will any joy come to my poor soul when Miss Aida is away?"

"Go to New Mexico or to Alaska and work for the Master. There is no real happiness but in doing good for the dear Christ's sake."

"I will do as you bid me. Then promise me that some day you will tell meyour reasons for compelling me to take this great work, single-handed and alone."

"I can never tell you; but should you chance to be present when my body is lying cold and still, and my spirit is absent with Him who made it, you may ask for a little case that hangs around my neck. Open it, and read my secret; then replace it in my grave, and know that my soul, pure and white, is smiling on you from the skies, rejoicing that I loved you too well to mar your life, and win you from this mission work."

He bowed his head upon his hands, and his strong frame was convulsed with grief.

"Dear friend," she continued, "do not make our parting more painful to me. You little know what this sacrifice costs me. You cannot know how much I suffer. Here is my father; come, let us join him."

The young man met the family, Grace Harvey included, and several days passed in this lovely country home. In a private conversation with Mr. Rocksbege, the young southerner found the father approved his daughter's decision, and the morning of his departure was decided. In the evening previous, he stood alone with Aida, on the beautiful lawn, and watched the stars twinkle in the "silver river of heaven."

"Miss Aida, I must say good-bye to you tonight. We must part when only the listening angels are present. Tell me once more that you love me, and that you will pray for me always."

She looked intently into his great, sad

eyes and said, "Mr. Leeland, I love you, and will pray for you continually." Then with a little gasp she added, "I would be willing to die, could I throw my arms about your neck, and drink deep of one parting kiss."

Oh! how his heart leaped with joy, but her hand stayed his advancing step, and she continued: "I would die ten thousand deaths rather than permit you to touch me."

He turned away saying: "Strange, strong, beautiful woman!"

CHAPTER II.

"The field is the world."

Beautiful she was and strong because she leaned on One whose strength is as the measure of His love, which never fails.

In one short week after this hour of agony had driven her to refuge in the Everlasting Arms, as never before, her father, the only one on earth who fully understood her, was brought home dead, having been killed in a runaway accident. What wonder if from her bursting heart broke forth that cry first uttered on Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" A greater wonder,—she was yet to gain that peaceful rest and say with him, "Thy will be done." She was as one in a dream. The preparations for the last sad rites were to her mechanical,—one and another

friend spoke words of comfort, but to no one did she respond as was her wont. Even little Ira, with heart filled with childish sympathy and a half consiousness of his loss, could not awaken his sister's smile or tear, and upon the mother devolved the various duties of the day. The following week, Deacon Foster, an uncle of Mrs. Rocksbege. with his wife came to comfort their neice in her affliction, and do what loving hands and Christ-like sympathy could do for the bereaved household. Time passed quickly, and ere they realized it the hour came when they must return to their home. Aunty Foster's heart yearned for the desolate Aida, and she proposed to take her home with her to "rest awhile,"—a proposition gladly seconded by her husband, and cordially accepted by the almost paralyzed girl. After three days by water and by railpassing through scenes of summer glory and autumn beauty, this southern-born maiden found herself in a strange country. Deacon Foster's son Phil, a lad in

his teens, was at the station with his democrat wagon as a carriage, and the old black horse.

But who that ever entered the home that awaited them could forget the charm that made the place gloriously happy for so many hearts. A plain one-story and a half farm-house, glistening in its coat of white paint, the wellkept lawn with a few shade trees, and a great climbing rose over the front door. Neatness and a wise economy appeared everywhere. What secret in that home made it dear to so many hearts? How did this old couple carry on their daily work, and yet welcome so graciously all who came, as to leave a very benediction as they passed. The father and two sons carried on the farm, yet none ever met the deacon in his farmer's blouse without feeling himself before a gentleman of "the olden time." None were seated at the generously set and daintily served table of that home, without feeling the charm of the gracious hostess whose own hand had worked the butter, and made

the fluffy "short cakes." Would there were many more such "model homes" in the great Badger state. After a refreshing tea, this time prepared by "the boys," but heartily enjoyed by all, Aida retired to her room, and through the open window, watched the moon rising higher and higher, til calmed, she bowed to thank her Heavenly Father for all the way she had been led, and soon was sleeping quietly.

With the early light of the morning sun a strange thing occurred. Was it from the very atmosphere of the home, or a benediction for the day, in answer to the evening family prayer? The last I ween. As she arose and looked about, she saw the quilt beneath her coverlet,—the quaint device of some artistic soul, who, having neither marble nor clay, had wrought her fancy in linen and cotton. Birds and beasts of bright colors, fashioned with no mean skill upon a white foundation. There was the camel and the dromedary, a lion and a lamb, with flowers in profusion. The incon-

gruity of the whole assemblage, and herself beneath them all, struck her peculiarly and for the first time since her father's death she broke out in a merry laugh, followed quickly by a shower of tears.

"Oh! I know," she said, "this is the chamber of peace," and with new meaning she sang softly, yet distinctly, "Nearer my God to thee, E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me." Ever after the memory of this "chamber of peace" brought a soothing sense of reconciliation to God's will.

A light tap at the door. "Mother" Foster appeared in neat, light calico dress and blue gingham apron; about her neck the always favorite white linen collar. "I heard you singing and so stepped up to say breakfast is ready. I did not intend to waken you after your long journey." That was "Mother" Foster. She, too, had the same "long ride," but had already been at work two full hours.

"It does seem good to get some of Moth-

er's tea. Bob is a pretty good cook, but I would recognize Mother's tea if I were to find it in Japan," said Phil.

"She always uses Japan tea, and of course you'd smell it there," replied Bob.

Breakfast and prayers being over, Aida watched the household machinery, no hurry, no worry, just a quiet little woman, with one pair of skillful hands to do it all, yet by 2 p. m. everything was complete, and the dear little lady dressed even more neatly, though in calico still, sat down to the work basket, to chat and to mend.

The deacon joined the circle, and endeavored to make the home cheerful for his niece. Time fails me to tell of this lovely, practical, Christian home. Friday night brought their daughter, Lucy, home from the Seminary at B—. She was accompanied by her dearest mate, Miss Alice Williams, who, after graduating, was to sail as a missionary to India.

Now the sympathy of the family widened still more, and not one, but two crphans were received, one from the southland, the other soon to go to the far east. Community in a great purpose binds hearts quickly and closely together, and the three girls were as the Three Graces in the deacon's household. That evening the dear old gentleman prayed most earnestly for them all, prayed that they might be one with the Father, and devoted to His service, wherever His providence should guide.

Saturday night brought the usual trysting time for Lucy and her mother in the family bedroom. Softly and sadly they commented over a chest of beautiful garments, that was to have been the trousseau of the elder sister, Mary, whose marriage to Rev. Henry Bell of Florida was not consummated, for the angels were in haste to carry her to a brighter home, that the "new name" might be given to her there.

The mother heart still fondly cherished the dainty garments, though a year had passed. At last the Christ-love absorbed the mother-love, and finding

Lucy's friend, Alice, with a meagre outfit. and just Mary's size, the beautiful garments were given to her. Aunty Foster felt that her angel daughter smiled from heaven upon her gift, and God would bless the wearer in India. The sabbath text thrilled one heart at least. It was the "Inasmuch" verse. Another heart thrilled strangely when the closing hymn was sung. Aida had long been considered an accomplished vocalist, but the peculiar pathos in her voice that day, struck every ear of the congregation, till, ere the last stanza was reached, voice after voice was silenced, and she alone sang on unconsciously:

"Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,—
Still all my prayer shall be,
Nearer my God to thee,
Nearer to thee."

"Gee whiz! Mother, I say it's a shame to have such a girl as that with such a voice go off to a lot of Negroes," said Phil, as they prepared dinner.

The deacon expressed the same thought as he said to Aida herself: "Do you now

my dear child, that God has granted you a wonderful gift, and you may use it for Him just as much, if you never go on a mission."

The following morning the three friends separated. What of their objects and their work?

CHAPTER III.

Nine miles! and the station is to be reached by nine o'clock in the morning! As the alarm clock strikes the hour of four, up leaps Mrs. Foster from her couch, to complete her daughter's packing, as school opens the following day. Full of enthusiasm for her success, nothing was counted a sacrifice, but everything needful a pleasure. While Mr. Foster and the boys were milking and doing the morning chores, she prepared the morning meal, but not now alone, for Lucy was early with her mother, sparing every step she could. Her heart was full of love, and her delicate, white, hands were not slow to prove it as she hastened to pare the potatoes and slice the meat. Soon other footsteps echo in the halls, and Alice and Aida appear, but pass on to the hammock for the 'good-bye talk."

Being seated, Alice began: "I suppose we shall miss greatly our dear friends when we really find ourselves separated, you in the south and I on the other side of the water, in a heathen land!"

"I know we shall," said Aida, "but I do not think of that, let it discourage me and I shun my duty. We must watch against just such temptations as that. The devil has peculiar ways of creeping in and delaying our work for the Master. The promise: 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end,' is a great comfort."

"Another precious assurance is: 'Without me ye can do nothing.' What an inspiration to a close fellowship with Christ," said Alice. "Then there will be so much to take my attention: new scenes, new customs, everything so different; I shall not have time to think on the 'might-bes' or 'might-have-beens.' How do you think I will get along with the food?"

"You will have to refrain from eating meat in that hot country, for 'if meat make my brother to offend,' or my sister sick, she must eat no meat while she is in India. But seriously, we must think more of how to remove the deceitfulness and immorality of the people."

"Yes," replied Alice, "even after they are converted, their ideas of 'mine' and 'thine' are very crude."

"But," added Aida, "we should not expect them to jump from deep heathenism into perfect Christianity. God's grace in the heart is a mustard seed and must grow. We are not perfect as Christians ourselves in this favored land. We have not learned that in the true Christian there is no 'mine,' but all is 'thine' under the principle of 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"I shall try not to expect too much, but sow the seed faithfully and trust for the harvest. The language will trouble me; studying from books, and speaking directly are two very different things.

"We do not look for ease—we go as servants. I want to be faithful, and consider all annoyances and disappoint-

ments not as trials in the usual sense, but as needed discipline, sent to fit me for better service."

"I do so love to talk with you about these things. You have had a deeper, truer experience than I, and I would learn from you. Did you ever think of Jesus as a foreign missionary? Why was he not? He certainly gave up His Father's glory for a home with sinful men."

Here the conversation suddenly stopped, and the girls found themselves out on the ground, for Lucy, creeping cautiously up, had given the hammock an unexpected toss. After a merry frolic, all scampered in to the breakfast table. At family worship, Aida stepped to the organ and lead the singing of "I need thee every hour," touching thus the lives of each. At this last gathering together, it was proposed they "pray around," which was gladly seconded by all the company. The heart of each was full, and they gladly told it to their Savior.

At breakfast Mrs. Foster was unusually quiet; a great trial stood before her, for soon her precious Mary's outfit would be placed in Alice's trunk. How could she part with it? Her heart sank within her, but the offering was made, greatly to Alice's delight, for she could not enter fully into the tender attachment of the mother for the garments of her deceased child.

Everything being ready the girls and Phil started for the station. "Such a lovely morning for these delightful hills; let us remember forever this last ride," said Lucy.

Though strangers a few days before, Alice and Aida were now warm friends. Soon the cars arrived and the girls sped away—Alice to her destination in India, and Lucy for a few more weeks of college life—while Aida and Phil turned homeward. The following days seemed quiet, but Mrs. Foster and her niece had many real heart-talks, and often the aunt was astonished at the depth of the young girl's experience and her penetration of

the deep things of God. For what had He been preparing her?

On Thursday, two young ladies from the city drove out to call. On the doorstep they stood with door-bell in hand, but they did not ring, simply listened to the sweet song from within, every word so full of feeling and so clearly enunciated:

"What God decrees, child of his love,
Take patiently, though it may prove
The storm that wrecks thy treasure here.
Be comforted! Thou need'st not fear,—
What pleases God.

"The wisest will is God's own will; Rest on this anchor and be still, For peace around thy path shall flow When only wishing here below, What pleases God."

A sweet peace shone upon her face, as she checked her overwhelming grief at the loss of her father, and the intense desire of her heart to see again Duane Leeland.

The bell rang, and she gently ushered in her friends. After a few moments they said they had been appointed to invite her to speak at their missionary meeting upon her work in the south, especially among the Freedmen. They could not let her rest for they did so want to hear directly from this field. Would she please to favor them?

"Certainly," said Aida, "it is no interference, only a comfort. Our time is God's gift. He expects us to use it all in some way for Him. Regret follows lost opportunities."

An evening was appointed early the following week, for Aida was to return south on Wednesday.

When Mrs. Foster heard the plan she exclaimed, "Capital! we shall hear your lecture, too. I have refrained from asking very much about it, because I wished you to have a perfect change of thought and scene."

"How lovely for you, Aunty, and I do seem another person, but I have wondered at your seeming disregard of that work."

Long before the hour, every seat in the lecture-room was filled, for all wished to hear the sweet singer tell her experiences. She began with the old plantation melodies, "O. John, Preachin' in de Wilderness," and "Noah Built de Ark," then told of the real situation of the Negroes, their deep poverty and intense desire for knowledge, their wonderful memories, and their close observation of everything about their teachers, till they are veritable "epistles known and read." Indeed she had seen and felt so much, that her heart spoke through her eyes and face, ere her lips uttered a word. She emphasized the utter neglect of their consciences during all these centuriesthat honesty and truthfulness could never be a natural fruitage from a system of enforced service, and yet, that by earnest, plain, Christian training they did become as trusty and consistent Christians as any of us. Indeed, she plead earnestly the cause of the "colored brother." then asked the personal question, "What will you do sister? you, brother, for these needy ones?"

As the plate passed, a liberal offering of \$75, showed how some poor students

could now enjoy a Christian education.

The following day was a busy one for Aida, as she was to turn homeward. The good-byes were nearly all said when a neighbor brought a letter from the office. She grasped it, flushed and blanched, but quietly slipped it in her pocket. Retiring to her room she scarcely darea to break the seal, but finally did so and read:

Dawson City Alaska, Sept. 15, 189—. My Dear Miss Aida:

With a mad endeavor to do more for the cause of missions than she who had forced me into the work, I rushed off to the region of yellow dust, determined to accumulate gold enough to build a college for colored people in every state in the south. Before I had been in the Klondike diggings a month, my heart was so stung by the sight of miserable, starving, wretched seekers after filthy lucre, that I wondered how God could bless one people with the same material which cursed another. 'Tis no more strange than that "out of the same

mouth proceed blessing and cursing." Tired and lonely, I wandered away to the shores of the Yukon, and while I was contemplating the value of the bags of nuggets that I had accumulated, there came into my soul a new, strange feeling. An indescribable impression sank into my heart. After a time I was able to clothe this sentiment in words: "Miss Aida's influence is worth more to the colored people than countless numbers of pillars of gold." Then I prayed to God to take me, not only my gold, but me, and use me to advance his cause and glorify His name. Now, night after night, I am sent for to pray with the dying, to plead with starving souls. Many, many, as they toss on their beds with fever, or shiver from cold and hunger, realize that though this world were all a Klondike region, "one moment of heaven is worth it all." Tell our Presbytery to send more missionaries to Alaska. My dear Miss Aida, since writing the above the "Cleveland" brought papers, from which I have learned of the death

of your noble father. The end was sad, but to be in heaven is glorious. I would come to you at once, but that I know you appreciate the sympathy expressed in the continuation of Christ's work, more than a few tame words spoken at your side. Now I know what love is. In loving Christ, my love for you grows more pure, more bright, more intense every day. May his Holy Spirit speed our work and hasten the day that unites us in heaven. Affectionately,

DUANE LEELAND.

An unusual radiance, a beautiful calm rested on the face of the lovely maiden as she bade good-bye to her uncle and aunt. Phil declared: "I'll just die without Aida. If Bob could run the farm, I'd go south with her. I tell you I would, for sure, and no joking."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHANGED HEART.

As Aida seated herself in the train which would quickly bear her toward the home of her mother, an intense sense of homelessness and loneliness swept over her. In genial company, during the last few weeks, she had partially recovered the shock from her father's loss. It is when we stand alone, face to face with the work of the death angel, we feel most keenly our losses.

With her heart bleeding in secret, Aida took from her bosom the cherished letter from Duane Leeland. She read and reread it,—the true breath of tender love was there, and her thoughts reverted to their first meeting in the sunny south, to the spark there kindled, which had grown to such a consuming flame.

To change the curent of her thought, she picked up a daily paper some passen-

ger had left, and began to read at random. Her eye fell upon Chataubriand's wonderful description of the two soldiers. who were so bound by the links of true friendship, that they bound themselves together by a chain on entering the field of battle, determined to share a similar tate. One fell dead under the arrow of a Cretan; the other, struck with a mortal wound, reclined upon his brother, and in a faint, expiring whisper, cried, "Oh, Warrior, thou hast fallen on sleep 'neath the fatigues of battle. Thine eyes shall no more open at my call, but the chain of friendship is unbroken,—it still links me firmly to thy side." With these words he fell exhausted on the bosom of his friend and died.

With a suppressed sigh, she threw the paper upon the seat, while her melting eyes proved plainly how she realized her heart was bound to Duane.

Aida's will was strong, and thoughts of love and marriage were not contemplated in the vein of ordinary young women. Proverbially weak in affairs of

the heart, they immediately ask themselves the question, "Why must I sacrifice myself?" Love is a natural impulse. Milton counts it a virtue, and marriage is a divine ordinance. Must affection he treated as an illusion, an impulse merely? Must one consider it with fear, as a disease,—with shame, as a weakness, or even with levity, as a mere accident? Why should love be treated less seriously than death? Yet it is often held aloft as a thing to be played with in tragedy, sung in songs, and written in poems or wicked novels. Death must come to all, and Love must come to all, but the state in which each finds us depends upon ourselves." Love had come to Aida, but it was an experience of the soul that could not be clothed in words of form, or theme. or soliloguy. An indescribable blending of one individuality with another, strange and incomprehensible as the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in the converted soul.

The day had passed, and the great city being reached where all must trans-

fer, Aida roused from her reverie only to lapse again into it as she sped directly for her home. The journey was not a plesant one. Every nook and farmhouse seemed to whisper that her father's arms would not be there to clasp her in a loving embrace. Memories of his kindnesses, like a perpetual fountain, flooded her soul, and increased her loneliness. At length the hour came when she caught sight of the dear little brother waiting for her. The greeting was tender and true, for these two loved each other devotedly. Toward her mother the same coolness stod as a Chinese walll, between them, yet Mrs. Rocksbege, in the pure, gentle, Christ-like habits of her life, spared no pains in providing for the comfort and happiness of her late husband's daughter. Her wardrobe was replenished, her books renewed, and many little articles of taste and convenience were packed in her trunks, to be a pleasure to her when she resumed her work in the colored school at N-, Miss.

An unexpected invitation to deliver an

address before their missionary society came one day from the Scotch church in the little village of Argyle. She gladly accepted, taking as her theme, "The Negro Woman." This town of Arfar and is known near gyle sturdy, God-fearing peofor its ple, as well as for its finely cultivated It is their boast that not for fifty farms. years has a Scotchman among them been accused of fraud or crime. So closely do they still adhere to the customs of the Fatherland, that it is quite unnecessary to tread the heather of their native soil to catch the full dialect and test the character of the thrifty Scot, as both can be well and freely studied in this lesser Scotland at Argyle.

As well paint a cherry tree in May without bloom, as a Scottish character without religion. In this country town it constitutes no small part of their very life. Their interest in a sermon is as keen, and their ability to discuss it as strong as was that of their fathers, in the day of Knox and Guthrie.

During Aida's trip to Argyle a fearful storm gathered, and as the train stopped, it burst in all its fury upon the town; a darkness that could be felt settled down over the landscape. As she stood upon the platform, her thought was, "No one can venture to meet me." But no, an aged farmer, an elder and one of earth's proud noblemen, fearing none but God, and hoping only for His favor, cried out abruptly:

"Be yoos Miss Rocksbege, and are ye frae hame?"

"Yes," said Aida; "I came, invited by your missionary society, and am so thankful to you for meeting me. I fear the storm will make you ill. Of course there can be no meeting."

"Nay, nay," said the old man; "it's a coorse nicht, and heavy travelin'. Can ye see afore ye, lassie? for I'm clean confused wi' the wind and rain. Bide a wee til I find the diversion o' the roads here, it's aboot here, back or forrit. This is it. We'll ha'e no trouble noo for the railroad and the bridge is passed."

A flash of lightning just then ran along the wire fence near by, and the entire artillery of heaven seemed on review.

"Can't I hold this umbrella before you?" said Aida. "The rain drives right in your face."

"It's deep the nicht, and hard on us baith, but it's a brave womman to venture 'oot. Ye did richt to come, and I hope to hear that yous equally persevering in the mission field where Mrs. Greenlee says yous going."

"Enthusiasm is the child of love,' said Aida, "and I am enthusiastic over missions because I love Him so much who first loved me, and permits me to share in His service."

"We'll same be hame noo—this is Ralston's woods, and it's na' lang after that. Yours the light in the kitchen window. It's a gude wark ye's in, and my only regret is that I've na been more faithful in doin' my part o' it. I canna do much for the gode Lord now, for we're getting auld, money a mile we ha' gaid together, but the Almighty kens it all. This is the hoose, and this is my womman; just go in and make yoursel' to hame."

The storm was breaking, and though it was late for service, and Aida had concluded there would be none, Miss Agnes McMichael, president of the society, drove up and hastily said: "Our meeting will be small, but there are a good many there now. Will you come with me?"

Aida quickly responded, and was soon ushered into a gathering of nearly 500 intelligent young people, who, true to their Scottish home, gave strictest attention. By the eloquence of her consuming earnestness and deep, personal spirituality, she alternately moved the audience to smiles and to tears, while her delineation of the "Negro Woman's Life and Character" were worthy of the woman who offered it. Aida received many invitations to "visit" while at the "settlement," but desirous of spending the last week in the north with her brother Ira, she hastened home.

Ira and his beautiful playmate, Grace Harvey, were constantly with her,—em-

thusiastic over the work of their especial mission bands, and often contending in childish glee as to the importance of the "cause" they espoused. During the year, Grace's band had furnished a bed in the Mary Holmes Seminary, and correspended with two of the pupils, and proud they were of their letters. Ira's band of boys had supported a teacher in the school in Berhon Ridge for the mountain whites.

As Ira grew, he reminded Aida more and more of her father, and often as she sat with him in the hammock, she would draw his head down upon her shoulder and press a kiss upon his brow. One evening she said: "When I am gone, you and Grace must love each other and try and work together."

"No, sir," said Ira, "I will never love any girl that works for the niggers but you, and I wish you would stay with us."

"But if I am happier there, wouldn't you have me go, Ira?" asked his sister.

"Yes," he replied demurely.

"I'm going there and help her some day," said Grace.

'No, you shan't," said Ira positively; "who would I have to play with, or help me in my arithmetic with you gone?"

Aida suppressed a smile. He would not love Grace, but he could not get along without her.

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CHAPTER V.

"BETWEEN GOD AND OURSELF."

For a few days Aida wandered aimlessly, enjoying her last days at home. children were an especial delight, yet the more kind and considerate the mother was, the more Aida shrank from contact with her. Mrs. Rocksbege's every advance toward affectionate cordiality was met with a respectful reserve. Still Aida loved her father's wife, loved her for her gentle Christian graces, admired her for her intellectual accomplishments. and shrank from the cold northern blue blood that coursed through her aristocratic veins. She longed to hasten her departure, though she hoped not to begin work until the weather was cooler, especially as there was fear of yellow fever.

"God moves in a mysterious way."
When she prayed: "Thine, O Lord, all is
thine, lead me to do thy will," the answer

came: "He is faithful who has promised."
A few days later, Ira came in from the postoffice. Handing a letter to Aida, she exclaimed: "O, a letter from Aunt Vincent!—and what a surprise,—she writes to me!"

Hastily breaking the seal, she read:

Melrose, Mass., Nov. ——.

My Dear Niece: The news of your dear father's death reached me only last week, through a friend whose husband is a minister in the Cumberland district. Mr. Adrian met you at N—— and knew your father. I am sorry you did not notify me quickly of Richard's death, but I want you to come and spend a couple of months with me on my southern plantation. I am just returning to it now, and shall expect you soon after the 18th. Your affectionate aunt,

M. L. VINCENT.

After reading the mote, Aida left the room without saying a word. She knew Mrs. Vincent's name was never mentioned by her father in the presence of her stepmother. And when they two

spoke of her, he always assumed such a far-away, wistful look. He had told her conce that if she ever needed advice she should go to this sister, adding, "She was my advisor for years, and if I had only followed her counsels, I should have been spared many reckless years."

By some mistake the letter had been delayed so that it was already the 20th. Aida decided to telegraph her aunt of her favorable decision, and in two days she was on her way to Buena plantation, Arkansas.

Were you ever on a plantation in those "bottoms?"—the broad, level acres covered with white down ready for the basket of the picker—its purity broken here and there by a stretch of green grove,—possibly a bit of tobacco or some corn stretches,—and the cane brake near the streams,—canes and willows vieing with each other in casting clear shadows on the smooth waters. Here Aida could enjoy real rest, and genuine southern life with her aunt.

"Aida," said her aunt one forenoon, "do

you know your father wrote me asking if it was his duty to permit you to teach in a colored school at N——? I answered that if the Lord had opened your eyes to the spiritual needs of those dark minds, and you had consecrated yourself to his service, I thought he should lay no obstacle in your way. He never wrote me again. I heard of your zeal and earnestness, and I knew the Heavenly Father was helping you."

While Mrs. Vincent was speaking, Pompey entered with a note. She looked pleased as she read, and remarked: "Mr. Kenwood will be here for sabbath, and will conduct a praise meeting. 'I want all the help we can get,' he says, 'as I must leave early Monday, and want to do all I can.'"

"Now, Aida, you can come forward and help with your voice in the singing. Your father often spoke of your voice in his letters, as being the only thing that could give him comfort."

On the east side of the stream that bordered "Buena," and hidden among the

graceful willows, stood the little chapel for the Negroes, some two hundred being employed about the plantation. Here, during certain months of the year, a private teacher was employed to conduct a school for the children,—usually a student from some college, wishing to help himself along financially and to teach the children to sing and also instruct them in the principles of true citizenship. Among these students had been the young man Kenwood.

"Oh, we loves Massa Kenwood. Nobody can sing as he do," was often heard in the twilight about the cabins.

Aida loved to hear the mellow voices from these cabins, as at evening they sang their favorite refrain:

"Hark! 'tis the shepherd's voice I hear Out in the desert dark and drear."

She was really enjoying southern life as never before, for she was care-free and knew herself more than welcome at her dear aunt's.

Sabbath found the chapel filled long before the hour with anxious listeners. Mrs.

Vincent had always insisted on promptness by her help, and as many had always lived with her, they showed their daily habits in their sabbath promptness. Reaching the open door, Mrs. Vincent introduced Aida to a tall, dark complexioned young man whose very soul was portrayed by the calm, holy earnestness of his face.

"Miss Rocksbege, I am very glad to meet you here. I have often heard of your success in the school at N——," said Mr. Kenwood.

"Yes," replied Aida, "I remember well the first sabbath you preached there. You called it your 'sabbath of blessing.'"

"Oh, yes, I received my first lesson in the study of those dark faces, as they looked up at me that day. I read unmistakably in those upturned faces an intense longing for the Invisible, the Eternal. But, it is time to open here."

Aida experienced anew the meaning of the Great Commission, and her joy in bringing the "Old, old story," but ever new, to these people was only equalled by their joy in receiving the proffered salvation. His blood was shed for them, for all mankind—the price was paid.

"Whiter than snow,
Wash me in the blood of the Lamb
And I shall be whiter than snow,"

never sounded sweeter than from this little chapel on Buena plantation.

Lunch was served as usual on the grass outside, and Mr. Kenwood remained.

"I am sorry this is to be my last sabbath here for so long," said he to Aida.

"Why so," asked Aida.

"I start for Hot Springs tomorrow morning to meet a dear friend of my brother's, a gentleman about to go to the Holy Land. He was taken ill while working for the Master in Alaska, and his physician has positively ordered an extended ocean trip, but insists on his having a friend accompany him besides his faithful Sycho. My brother recommended me as he knew it would be a fine chance for us both.

"How fortunate," said Mrs. Vincent.
"Yes, indeed, and brother also says that

his friend intends becoming a missionary in Japan, since his health will not permit him to return to Alaska. He has deposited an immense amount of gold, to be used in building colleges and seminaries in the south."

Happy for Aida that

"Night had drawn her sable curtain down And pinned it with a star."

CHAPTER VI.

Not my will, but think, O, God!

Aida's heart gave a great throb and fluttered wildly, for she knew the friend from Alaska could be no other than Duane Leeland.

Soon the hot blushes suffused her cheek and she trembled, but evening had wrapped its cloak of shadow about her. and no one knew of her emotion. cusing herself she went directly to her room, thinking of the apparent present. and prospective future. All her thoughts were of Duane. He was to cross the ocean. Should she never see him again? Her deep womanly sympathy went out to him in his battle with disease, and her impulse was to hasten to him and minister to his needs. But she was convinced that God wanted her to work in the southland. Falling on her knees, in silent prayer, with her head resting on

the pure, white coverlet, the clock on the mantel ticked off several hours ere she could arise, strong in the strength of the Master.

For several weeks Aida enjoyed her visit at Buena, and then she began to feel impelled "to be about her Father's business" once more. She had recently heard from her friend, Alice Williams, and her plans of foreign work, and this proved an added incentive to Aida for renewed activity.

One afternoon, while seated on the verandah absorbed in thoughts of the past, she determined she would return to N— at once, and resume her work so well begun, and perfect it as fully as possible. She longed to be at work in the land where she had met and loved Duane Leeland.

His handsome face and well-known form she would miss, oh! so much. But now, people, (especially the Leelands) might cease their scornful comments upon his attentions to the "nigger teacher."

Just then Mrs. Vincent appeared at the

morth end of the verandah, and catching sight of Aida, exclaimed:

"I was just looking for you. Come with me to one of the cabins and see a little pickaninie that has met with an accident."

"Certainly, I'll be glad to go," said Aida.

Mrs. Vincent disappeared in the kitchen, but soon returned with an armful of small packages and a bottle of liniment. Aida caught her hat, and together they passed through the spacious grounds to the "quarters" near Buena chapel. There they entered a small cabin scrupulously neat. Mammie Dixon met them, saying: "Law! Missie Vincent, hab you dun gone and brought dat angel singer to see Nimbus? He'll be pow'ful glad, Nimbus will."

As Aida glanced about the room, her eye fell on a little piece of humanity about 10 years of age, all eyes, gazing intently at her, but as their glances met, his head disappeared beneath the quilts. Reproving Nimbus for his ill-manners,

Mrs. Dixon drew away the covers and showed the friends his bruised and sprained ankle. The liniment was an ever ready help, and Mrs. Vincent began rubbing the little spindling leg, now swelled and painful.

At her first touch, Nimbus instantly threw off his coverlets, screaming, "Lor! Missie Vincent, Lor! You'll kill dis nigger, sure!"

"Hush up dis minute, Nimbus Dickson," commanded his mother. "Missie Vincent will make you well."

After many grimaces and much twisting of his well foot, Nimbus settled down to the inevitable. His bright eyes were fixed on Aida's sweet face, and when the "company" was about to leave, Nimbus ventured to whisper, "I do love singin, I does, specially church singing like the chapel, last Sunday evening."

Aida could not refuse this unique request, and dropping carefully on the foot of his cot, she sang sweetly, "Jesus Loves Me," and "Rock of Ages," while litle black heads quickly filled the win-

dows and bright eyes peered in at the door. The sun was sinking low behind the forest trees as they left the cabin, the birds sweetly sang their evening farewells, and from the distance came the subdued voices of the darkies returning from the fields.

In the old home, the fatherless Ira and the heart-broken mother were passing the days of their poignant grief. To Ira. his former pleasures were nothing without the companionship of his dear father. Even the graceful horses shared his sorrow, and softly whinnied for their absent master, when Ira appeared. One day Bay Bettie, his father's favorite driving horse, raised her intelligent eyes to his. then looking up and down the avenue with a questioning gaze, asked as best she could for her old master, till the boy threw his arms around her neck and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "No. Betty, dear, will never see him again!"

Mrs. Rocksbege was, meanwhile, in the library near the "vacant chair." The retired life of their house had brought the inmates very near together, and love was deep and strong, their tastes were similar, and Mrs. Rocgsbege had never fully understood her husband. He had always been so kind and so good, yet, at times he lived in a regretful past, and his face would be very sad.

"Into the valley's lap
The dewy morning throws
A thousand pearly drops
To make a single rose.
Thus often in the course
Of life's few fleeting years
A single error costs the soul
A thousand tears."

She ventured to question him regarding his sadness, but he hastily replied, "Nothing, Mary, dear, that I can tell you will make you better or happier, so do not ask me, please."

When the news came of his death, after the first great outbreak of grief, as she knelt by his casket, she finally could pray, "Not my will, but thine, O, Lord."

She would gladly have taken Aida to her heart at this time of their mutual sorrow, but a mysterious entity held her aloof.

To Aida, Ira's letters had always been a delight, but since visiting her aunt, none had come. Once he had tried to write, but getting as far as "we are all well," he paused. "How can I write that when my papa is gone," and he left the letter unfinished. His first great trial was revealing to him more and more the need of his Heavenly Father. The many texts, learned at home and in the Boys' band all came to him, and seemed to point him surely to the One who doeth all things well.

Grace Harvey was a little missionary angel to Ira, aiding him in many ways during these trying times.

One morning a thick, heavy letter came from Salt Lake City. Mrs. Rocksbege brightened as her eager fingers burst its seal, for it was from her loved brother, Rev. G. P. Norton, who was in charge of a chapel near that city, and contained a most urgent invitation to his sister and her son to visit them in their western home. Could she arrange to leave. Ira was delighted at the

thought and begged hard for a favorable decision. After a few days of consideration a hearty letter of acceptance was forwarded.

CHAPTER VII.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Finally, all needful arrangements were complete for the long journey. The boy Ira had gone to see Miss Grace, who was just recovering from scarlet fever, but could now be seen. Mrs. Rocksbege had found a trusty man with whom to leave the dairy farm, and by the aid of a legal advisor of her husband, all business matters were well adjusted. They were to start the following Tuesday. Sabbath morning, Ira complained of headache and sore throat; his mother gave him some simple remedies, but he evidently grew worse, and by evening the family physician, Dr. Lyman, was called. All night the little boy tossed and moaned, but before morning his mother detected a rash about his neck and chest. It was scarlet fever, but apparently not a severe case, since the rash was so free.

Now the days dragged slowly, each one sapping more and more Ira's strength as the fever raged.

"What do you think, Doctor? Do tell me!" said Mrs. Rocksbege.

"Shall I?" said he, looking sorrowfully at her heart-broken face. "His temperature is very much against him, the crisis is near and I do fear for the results. He is so weak, I fear he will not resist; still there is hope, for his natural constitution is good."

The mother returned to the bedside, but her heart was too full for control. How could she see her only child fade away. She passed to her own room, and casting herself upon her bed, burst into a flood of tears, then begged her Heavenly Father that this cup might pass from her, but if not—that she might truly say, "Thy will be done." After a few moments she returned to the bedside feeling much calmer. A telegram was sent Aida, and ere long the reply came that she would be there by first train. It was a perfect spring morning

in the south, when Aida started for her once happy home. She had now no eye for the beauty of hill and valley. She thought only of the changes in her life since she rode upon that same route several years before, and of her precious little brother. She was then a school girl, careless and happy, life all rosy, and her plans for usefulness seemed so easy to execute in the future; but alas! scarcely one had been fully realized. The darling brother over whose birth at first she was very jealous, since she alone had held her father's love, now occupied a large place in her affections.

Home was reached at last, but no one was at the stile. An old servant at the door met her with sad eyes, saying, "Oh, Miss Aida, you're too late." She did not wait for more, but rushing up stairs found Mrs. Rocksbege waiting for her.

"Dear Aida," said Mrs. Rocksbege, "my boy is dying."

"No, no," replied Aida, "God answers prayers."

"Yes, dear, when we are worthy."

"His blood can make the vilest worthy, and one so pure, so true as you need not fear. You'll hear 'his loving kindness in the morning.'" Turning to the doctor who entered the room, she asked, "Will Ira get well?"

"I fear not, Miss," he replied.

Her great dark eyes looked into his, as she continued:

"'Perfect love casteth out fear.' If God guides you in your ministrations, Ira must get well."

The doctor shuddered. Had he ever thought of the Creator in connection with his work? Of the Omnipresent, Omniscient Being who could influence his thought, and control the effect of his medicine? He had hesitated over the last compound. Would he have given a different portion if he had turned to God for direction? Aida Rocksbege controlled him by a strange magnetism. He returned to the room of the invalid, bowed his head on his hands and two great pearly drops rolled through his fingers. A vast hush enveloped the

house, like a great calm after the departure of a great group of disappointed angels. The doctor was praying.

The night was gone, and the glad sun poured through the heavy curtains at the windows, when Ira opened his eyes and smiled upon his mother and sister.

Weeks of convalescence and days of necessary disinfecting, and preparations were under headway for another separtion, Mrs. Rocksbege and Ira to spend the winter With Rev. G. P. Norton near Salt Lake City and Aida to go to N—, Miss Notwithstanding the love and respect which grew and deepened in the hearts of these three for each other, there still remained an intangible Rubicon, that could not be passed over.

The parting between Grace and Ira was rather amusing. In their efforts to not appear to care for the separation, they acted offish and ugly toward each other. Mrs. Rocksbege endeavored in vain to bring about a kindly exchange of letters.

They had hardly been five minutes in

his uncle's western home, when Ira inquired for pen and paper, and was so disgusted with his mother's suggestion that the first word of his letter must not be spelled with two e's, that he sought a secluded spot, and spent hours pouring forth an account of the journey, the landscape, scenery, and the gorgeous cities, ending by saying, "I'd rather be at home with you, than with all the hills and mountains in the world. Your loving playmate, Ira."

Weeks after, he wrote to Aida and his letter was characteristic:

Dear Aida: This is the horriblest place anybody ever lived in. Papa had just you and me, and didn't he love us though! My! a papa here has so children he can't count many 'em, and he don't care if he can't, and they would just as soon he would die as not. Mother's been doing missionary work among the Mormons, and I heard her tell Uncle Philip that the lady she visited wanted to know if it was wrong to wish her husband was dead.

he is so mean to her. If I were the Lord, I'd send a cyclone and clean all the men out of Utah, and set the women free. I told a little boy the other day that his father was going to another kind of lake and he said he didn't care if he did. I am glad you and Grace did not come with us. If they ever stole you I'd start 'em to burning before Satan got possession of them. Mother says we must stay here three years, and try to save lots of souls. I don't want to save the men. Tell me if I must, Aida. Your affectionate brother, IRA ROCKSBEGE.

Aida was warmly welcomed by all her old friends at N—. When she met the Leelands, there was a cold, polite stare, or the remark, as they passed, "That irrepressible teacher of the sons of Ham!" or "The prima donna of the nigger school." This cut Aida to the heart, yet she felt it was better far to be sinned against than to sin.

A month pases and Aida was fully settled in her work when a dispatch arrived.

"Aunt Vincent died at 3:50 a.m. Heart disease. Funeral Monday, 2:30 p.m. J. A. Kenwood."

Overwhelmed, yet rising to the hour, she hastily threw a few things together and prepared for the first train to Buena plantation next morning. While the school building was near the river Aida boarded some blocks away, for 't was difficult to find a good white family who would take the "nigger teacher." About one o'clock in the night a bright light awakened Aida. Springing from her bed, what was her horror to find apparently the whole of that part of the town in flames. Hurrying on her clothing she hastened to the little school room, to find it only a blazing pile of ruins, while a dozen cabins near by were blazing furiously, and the few firemen were looking about for water. Aida was turning to leave the scene of brilliant horror, when she heard her own name spoken in feeble accents. It came from an old, dilapidated cabin enveloped in flames. Surely no one could be in there. She listened intently. Again she heard in feeble, stifling tones, "Oh, Miss Aida." She rushed to the window and gazing in, beheld an old, decrepit invalid writhing in agony on a burning pallet. She rushed through the door, and with supernatural strength caught the old colored auntie up in her arms, and carried her through the flames to a place of safety. But with the tremendous exertion necessary to support the helples burden, the beautiful girl breathed the flames, and ere long fell beneath a pecan tree, apparently dead.

Can mortal man say that God is not in all His providences. Duane Leeland had visited his southern home to say good-bye to the inmates before he started on his ocean voyage. Notwithstanding his mother's remonstrance he sought the burning district, and the angels guided his footsteps, until they were stayed by the beautiful, lifeless saint at his feet. Why did he so calmly stoop and pillow the beloved head upon his bosom? Because something told him they could

only be united in heaven. Death to him was the gate to the city of God. He felt almost happy as he pressed the loved form to his heart. Removing the charred gown from her snowy neck he beheld a tiny gold chain. He drew it forth, and the little case lay in his hand. "This is the hour," he said to himself, "that she bade me press the spring and read the secret that separated us on earth." His hand trembled, his heart throbbed. He pressed his thumb on the catch. It. would not open. He must take his arm from around her, that he might insert his finger nail in the crack. He laid his burden gently down. He pressed his lips on her cold forehead. He took the locket and pressed the spring; it opened but he did not see its contents for the bright eyes of Aida Rocksbege shone upon him questioning: "Have you seen?" and closing the case he said, "No." She had not breathed enough of the flame to injure her, but had fainted away in a death-like swoon.

Together they worked for the desolate

pare for the train that would carry her to observe the last sad rites of honor for her father's beloved sister.

Hastening on to Buena she arrived just in season for the funeral. Resting that evening, the following day Mr. Shirley, the village attorney, called to see Miss Rocksbege on business.

"I presume," he said, "you are not aware that your aunt has left her will mentioning you as her sole heir to this estate. I am named as executor, and have been her legal advisor for many years. I am at your service at any time, and I hope we will be as good friends as were your worthy aunt and myself. Good morning."

CHAPTER VIII.

"I will guide thee with mine eye."

When Aida returned to N-she was in deep thought as to the property she had just inherited from Mrs. Vincent. She wanted to make the best possible use of it in blessing and benefiting the Freedmen. With mingled feelings of joy and sadness, she learned that Duane Leeland had left in trust with responsible trustees gold sufficient to rebuild the colored district, and to erect a large building for the education of the aspiring race. The board of directors were to be guided in every respect by the wishes and suggestions of Miss Rocksbege. To this grand work she set about with the prayer ever in her heart: "Teach me thy way, O, Lord, and lead me in a plain path." She daily realized the verification of the promise: "I will guide thee with mine eye," and often she sang:

"Thy calmness bends serene above
My restlessness to still;
Around me flows thy quickening life,
Thy presence fills my solitude,
Thy providence turns all to good."

The enthusiasm of the children and their parents knew no bounds when they saw the resurrection of their homes, and the building of the beautiful institution. A glad praise service was held, and everyone brought as his or her offering whatever he or she could, whether money, eggs, greens, a chicken or what not,—all brought something for the good of others.

This new enterprise engrossed all Aida's time and thought. As the year advanced she realized more and more the blessedness of doing good, and her life grew daily more bright, beautiful and happy. Just before the close of the school year, Aida received a very hearty letter from Mrs. Rocksbege, in the name of her brother, inviting her to spend a season with them in the mountains. She was surprised and delighted, and quickly responded favorably, for she really needed just such an entire change which such a trip would give.

To her colored students Salt Lake City seemed the very verge of creation, and many were the tearful good-byes expressed, when, some weeks later, she boarded the train for St. Louis, and thence on to the west. When nicely seated Aida looked about at her fellowtravelers, when her eye fell upon the familiar gaze of Claribel Leeland, who occupied a seat at her hear. Aida greatly enjoyed the day, noting the change of scene from section to section, the varieties of faces, and the curious vehicles about the stations. The old time southern dray and mule was rapidly disappearing as she neared the metropolis of the southwest, and the great freight wagons. with ponderous horses were substituted. At 8 o'clock in the evening all must change at the Relay depot. Gathering her few belongings, Aida moved out with the rest, perhaps a little more hurriedly since her time was so limited to catch the waiting train. Once she paused, thinking she had dropped a coin, but missing nothing and seeing nothing, passed on

with the crowd. Once out, passengers separated in every direction, Miss Leeland with the others.

What was it Claribel felt beneath her foot? Stooping she picked up a beautifully wrought, small case, with a bit of slender chain attached. There was no time to seek the owner, and she hastened on.

Had Aida known the loss of her heart's treasure, and that it had fallen into Claribel Leeland's hands, the remainder of her journey would have been less joyful and restful. Little events make up the true life of every human being. Even the breaking of a tiny chain and the loss of a dainty case reveal the character of the loser and the finder.

Rapidly the broad prairies were passed, all gray with their dried grasses, or yellow with the wild sun-flowers, till she caught the first glimpse of the Rockies. Gladly would she have delayed at Denver for "side trips" here and there, up the wonderful canyons, and over mountain tops, but on her return, her mother

might be with her, and little Ira,—then together, they would enjoy the Garden of the Titans. Through miles of snow-sheds, long tunnels and many wild gorges, the train flew till Aida's destination was reached. She beheld the wondrous dome of the Mormon temple, but was soon in the presence of her mother and uncle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LOST TREASURE.

The family of Mr. Norton consisted of himself and wife, a son 25 years of age-soon expected home from the east, and Deda, a sweet daughter of ten. Their home, though modest, bore unmistakable signs of comfort, peace and plenty, with an air of hearty welcome sure to make one feel at home. For a few days Aida gave herself up to rest and quiet enjoyment, which, though she was unaware of it, was greatly needed, after the long strain consequent to the death of her father, the rebuilding of the colored district, and the year of labor in getting the college fully organized. She also began to thoroughly enjoy the companionship of her stepmother.

At the close of the third day after her arrival in Salt Lake City Aida received a shock which might have destroyed her further enjoyment. On this day Mr. Norton brought home with him for tea a gentleman who had been traveling extensively, a friend of his school days, and a southerner. Upon being introduced to Mrs. Rocksbege and Aida, he gave the latter a searching glance, repeating the name "Rocksbege," meditatively, as if trying to recall some former knowledge of the name. After tea Mrs. Rocksbege and Mrs. Norton excused themselves to attend to some preparations for the Christmas festivities, and Aida was left alone with Mr. Norton and his friend. who still studied the face of our heroine. Finally he said: "Miss Rocksbege, I have been puzzled to know, since meeting you, where I before met one of your name. It has just flashed across my mind that I once had dealings of rather a peculiar character with a worthy young man named Rocksbege in the south. Being a justice of the peace in the town where he lived, I was called upon to marry him to a bright young woman, who died within a year."

A deathly pallor spread over the face of the beautiful girl, her breath seemed to leave her entirely. She would have fallen from her couch had not the stranger kindly supported her, and looking into her eyes, read all he wished to know. He gently pressed her hand, saying, "Fear nothing from me, my dear young lady, I was your father's friend." A little camphor brought by her uncle revived her, so that the color returned to her cheeks.

She at once raised her hand to feel for the locket or case, she always were about her neck. Great was her horror to discover it was gone.

At first she thought she might have lost it in the house, and that her mother might find it; then she recalled stepping on a small object, and stopping an instant at the station at the Relay depot. She felt that it was there she had lost it. The loss was to her incomparable, but she consoled herself that whoever found it would never know the secret it contained to her. Soon she plead fatigue and retired to her room, there to

ponder upon her misfortune, and wonder if she would ever regain the treasure—the gift of her father—so valuable to her, and worthless to anyone else save Duane Leeland, to whom she had promised it should in time reveal her secret. Had she dreamed her treasure was in the hands of an enemy, she would scarcely have considered the matter so calmly.

Carl Norton was to return the next evening, and great was the rejoicing, for he was a great and general favorite. Bright, witty and talented, he was a son of whom to be proud, and Aida found herself with the rest anticipating his return.

Having been well posted by the talkative little Deda as to her brother—that "he was not a minister, like Papa, but (in a whisper) she liked him most as much,"—"lots of ladies like Carl," "he's engaged to one,—that's Maud's sister," (Maud being her chum) and other like confidences, she felt that she almost knew him.

The evening of his return was very pleasantly spent, and had it not been for

the constant thought of her loss, Aida would have been quite happy.

The next few days were busy ones for all the Norton household, for Mr. Norton, a generous, broad-minded man, believed in making Christmas truly "merry" for those to whom such joys are seldom known. Aida's missionary spirit prompted her to many kind deeds and her willing hands were never idle; though her heart was often heavy; her thoughts flew constantly across the ocean to him whose very memory brought peace and gladness to her soul.

Many friends of the Nortons had called upon Aida and her mother, and for almost the first time in her life, Aida felt how restful it was to be for a while free from care and in the society of cultured people; still she never ceased to pray for those for whom she worked, and to aid by her now abundant means. Among those whom Aida had met was "Maud's sister," Miss Grace Clyde. They were drawn to each other at once in a sisterly way, so that when Miss Clyde invited

Aida to meet a friend from the south, Aida gladly accepted the invitation.

Imagine, if you can, the consternation upon both faces, as with all the warmth of her love for each, Miss Clyde presented to Miss Rocksbege Miss Claribel Leeland of N—, Miss.

Aida was the first to recover her selfcontrol, and politely, if coolly, bowed;
but Claribel Leeland was too surprised
and chagrined that the "nigger teacher"
should be placed upon a level with herself to at once regain composure. When
she found the despised "nigger teacher"
was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Norton,
for whom she had a wholesome respect,
and later, when Carl Norton called for
Aida, her astonishment knew no bounds.
She determined, if possible, without losing her own footing with her friends, to
quietly lower their estimation of Aida,
so strong was her unreasonable dislike.

She was destined to be unsuccessful in these unkind plans, for Aida was fast becoming a favorite in the Norton home, especially with Deda, while for Miss Lee-

land. Deda at once conceived a dislike, pronouncing her "stuck up," and "not a bit like Aida." One day after a visit at Maud's, she confided to Aida that "Miss Leeland was a very wicked sister, for she heard Carl ask how her brother was, and she told him she was not her brother's keeper,' and didn't know anything about him, 'cause he went away on a fool's errand, and it was all owing to a poor 'nigger teacher;' she hadn't any use for 'nigger teachers.' " All of which was very disheartening to Aida. Soon there followed a bit of news so startling in its nature, that all other feelings were lost in the one desire.—to regain possession of her lost treasure.

Miss Leeland, wishing to win little Deda, whom she knew was fond of Aida, one day amused the little girls by giving an account of her trip from N— to Salt Lake City, and told them of finding the locket and bit of chain,—showing it to them,—but they were unable to open it—a fact which so nettled Deda that she repeated the incident to Aida in disguest.

little knowing how important a fact she was disclosing.

It was now Aida's turn to receive a shock. To think that she should lose that one article she most wished to keep—that it had been found by one whom she could least trust, and from whom she would be least likely to regain it,—that unless it was returned to her, her promise to Duane Leeland must be broken! All this was a revelation for which she was not prepared.

The time had now come for her to return to her duties in N—. She would return with new zeal and many new and helpful ideas from Mr. Norton, broader views and experiences, a happier relationship with her stepmother, but—without her trasured locket; the connecting link between her father and herself, unless by some as yet unknown means, she should be able to secure possession of it. How was it to be accomplished?

CHAPTER X.

Whither, oh, Whither?

The noble character of Mrs. Rocksbege, founded upon faith in God, and nurtured by a life of lofty purpose and self-sacrifice for others, had sought for some definite object on which to expend itself, and this year found its gratification in Utah.

The home missionaries of the far west are among the most devoted of God's servants, whether regularly supported by some Board or working at their own charges. None are more true to God and country than those in Utah.

Under the hand of man, with a climate unsurpassed, and possibilities limitless, no better place could have been found for the "imperium in imperio," which the Mormon hierarchy would so fully establish.

The married life of Mrs. Rocksbege

had had but one thing to mar it—the single secret in her husband's heart that never could be revealed to her—and the condition of Mormon women, in their degradation and servitude drew forth her keenest sympathies. Polygamy seemed so unspeakably degrading, fostering every unlovely trait in woman, and the most brutal and cowardly in man. Her mother-heart was drawn to some bright little children not far from her brother's home; one bright fellow, Harry Silby, was just Ira's age, and was particularly responsive. Many times she took him to walk or ride with her, he acting as her guide. She soon came to be so at one with the boy, she spoke freely to him of the Bible and of Jesus, the only Way. His heart opened to the truth, and at the same time she gained a clearer insight than from any book, of how the Latter Day Saints instruct their children.

After being at her brother's four month's, Mrs. Rocksbege heard Mr. Norton tell of a very promising country school, taught freely by an eastern girl who was there for her health. She had been successful and he had watched her carefully and hoped much from her effort. But this teacher had been called home suddenly, and the school was closed until someone else would volunteer.

"Oh, let me go George," said Mrs. Rocksbege. "I can teach; I love child-ren dearly, and can win them, and through them the mothers. Do let me go. I'm just full of the 'send-me-Lord' spirit.,"

Mr. Norton, looking at her face glowing with enthusiasm and spiritual light, said:

"Yes, sister Mary, you go. It will not be for long, and God bless you and keep you. Yet we shall miss you awfully here."

"I can help here some still, on Saturdays and Sundays, and some of the time I can drive back and forth; it is not such a very long drive in good weather."

Mrs. Rocksbege found the school de-

lightful and easy to manage—indeed the attendance grew more regular and the children more attentive, until the priests forbade their coming at all.

The success and influence of the new teacher irritated these elders, for, where love reigns, children are drawn instinctively, and they would soon slip back to their school. Many annoying things were done by outsiders, still Mrs. Rocksbege appeared to neither see nor hear them; her sweet face, for a time, overawed the schemers, but they vowed that "something must be done!"

Her welcome visits to the sick and sorrowing were introducing an element that they could not tolerate. She never lost any opportunity of teaching the true way of salvation, and whenever she possibly could, offered to pray with the family, leading them to the true Light, the only Way of salvation. This new teaching in these Mormon cabins revived the memories of many a childhood hour at a mother's knee, before coming to this "garden of the west." Realizing that

the strength of the Mormon hierarchy lay in the docility of its women and children, the elders determined to speedily end this Gentile woman's influence. She had occasionally spent a night, by special invitation, in the families of her pupils -especially in the Peavy fahily, and had gained many whispered confidences till her conviction had grown stronger, that the apparent utter obedience and abject servility of these Mormon women under polygamy, were often merely appearances and because they could see "no way out," they were "bound, hand and foot," "must" was the only alternative—but for their children they longed for different things.

One Monday morning, after a delightful Sabbath with her brother, Harry Silby was to drive her out to her school bringing back the horse, for she had agreed to spend the entire week assisting in an entertainment to be given by her children's Band.

Driving along the beautiful road, the distant mountains bathed in golden sun-

light, the air inspiring, and everything breathing peace and plenty, she exclaimed:

'Every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.' What can be more glorious than nature in her simple beauty?"

Harry willingly joined in conversation, saying he was now fully convinced
that Christ was the true Savior. Brigham Young and Joseph Smith were no
prophets—only deceivers. He was going to come out and declare himself on
the side of Jesus. Greatly pleased and
tenderly touched, Mrs. Rocksbege asked
if he fully realized all that the step invovled—the loss of friends, and perhaps of business. It would certainly
bring down on him the wrath of the elders.

"Yes," said he, "I do, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," and I hope to receive the immortal crown."

Much moved, Mrs. Rocksbege was about to congratulate him over his determination, when, at the edge of a little

wood near a stream, they were accosted by a man in a buggy, which he had driven nearly across the narrow way. He came from Mrs. Peavey's. She was his sister: her little girl was very sick, and wanted to see her teacher, and the mother did too. He intended to have started earlier, but was detained; would she get right in with him, and her carriage could go back to town. She readily consented, for the three little Peavy children were among her brightest pupils. Mrs. Peavy was a poor, spiritless creature who had been betrayed to this far-away "land of perdition" instead of New Jerusalem. She could do nothing, but she did hope in some way to snatch her three children from the clutches of the elders.

Bidding Harry good-bye, they separated, but whither?

Saturday came and Sunday, and Mrs. Rocksbege did not appear at her brother's. Harry then told of the stranger, "Mrs. Peavy's brother," taking her in the carriage, and leaving him to return earlier than otherwise. He had

suspected nothing, but Mr. Norton, on hearing his statement, blanched and flushed, and spoke hurridly:

"Harness up the horses, Harry. You and I, and if possible, Mr. Weller will drive out and see what has occurred." They drove rapidly over the hills, and, reaching the little school-house, saw that all was quiet. Inquiry showed that on Monday the children gathered as usual, and waited for their teacher till about 9:30 o'clock, when a boy came with a note that purported to be from Mrs. Rocksbege, saying her brother's wife was very ill, and there would be no school this week.

A horrible premonition swept over the minds of Mr. Norton and Mr. Weller, though neither intended to betray his fears. Hastening on to the Peavy's, they were assured that Mrs. Rocksbege had not been there at all, and the children had not been ill. Mrs. Peavy's only brother was sitting by the door, and Harry said he certainly was the stranger whom he had met that morning, but

he denied knowing anything about the disappearance of the teacher.

Frantic with fear and angry at heart, Mr. Norton and his friends hastened home and gave the alarm. He appealed to the civil authorities for aid to discover his sister. They were so under the domination of the Mormon church, he feared, in his heart, he had not real support or aid there, consequently he would leave nothing undone by himself.

Every available means of investigation was speedily and thoroughly tested, but Mrs. Rocksbege seemed to have disappeared as truly as if the earth had engulfed her. This evinced the wouderful organization and power of the Mormon system. Cruel, cumning, unscrupulous of method, their plans were to be effective at all hazards. To all inquiries only one reply was received: "Don't know." The seal of the church was upon their eyes, their ears, their hips, their minds. Colonies of these same people, with priests sworn to the same despotic system, had gone out in all directions—to

Idaho, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming, and there this same system was maintained. Where, in all this net-work of Mormon cumning and deceit, was Mrs. Rocksbege! A week gone unconsciously to her friends. Where could she be! if indeed she was alive. Every fifth man among the Latter Day Saints is an official of some kind, and so perfect is the espionage and the reporting; that, as by a living wire, dispatches reach the master minds. This was no sudden or new plan, but a well-concerted scheme to kill the influence of this Gentile woman.

Prostrated with grief, and overcome by weariness and labor, at an utter loss as to what method to try next, Mr. Norton threw himself upon his knees, praying as he had not, even in the darkest hours of his search, for relief from heaven. No Gentile arm could avail. God must raise up his own executor. Aida had been alert for every intimation. Could even Harry Silby, whom they all trusted so much, could he be in the plot?

Aida prayed that deliverance might come, and her precious mother be spared, and restored. She knew she loved her, but this trial had developed the depth of her devotion to a degree unrealized by herself.

She and Ira worked and talked and prayed together. There was something particularly strange in the boy. Nay, a boy no longer. On the first intimation of his mother's disappearance, he threw aside the kite he was making, and sprang to his feet. For a moment he looked like a stag at bay. Out of the boy seemed to tower a man. The deep, reverenial, filial love of his heart throbbed like a new impulse, and from the look in his wide open eyes, Aida read a determination that nothing could daunt till crowned with success. He followed up every clew, gave advice to his uncle, and consulted with their friend, Mr. Weller, But to Aida he always turned for comfort, and sought her to pray with him when he desired his strength renewed.

"Aida," said Ira, as they stood out on

the lawn alone, watching the sunset behind the western hills, "Aida, something tells me that you can find my mother. In a dream last night, I saw a little girl who is to guide you to my mother. It will cost you a great sacrifice, but you will find her. Will you go?"

Aida answered: "Yes."

CHAPTER XI.

THE RECOVERY.

Imagine the surprise of Mrs. Rocksbege as it dawned upon her that she was a Mormon captive. They had driven but a short distance when two more men appeared, the carriage stopped and they were seated in it, then all drove on rapidly. To resist them was useless. For a moment she shuddered and grew faint. but knowing her only earthly protection was in a calm dignity, a wise discretion, and temporary submission, she rallied her best energies, and was herself again. She hoped her brother would hear of the discontinuance of the school and come to investigate. Her mind was in a whirl of doubt and fear. There was little conversation between these men, but she caught some glances that she could not fully interpret, and finally one said:

"Perhaps your entertainment will not

come off this week, or it may be of another kind."

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Rocksbege, "we had a very pretty program under preparation."

After many turns in the way and evidently to thoroughly confuse their guest. and a ride of nearly two hours, the elder drove up to a quaint, adobe house on the outskirts of a goodly city. A neat fence stood in front, and a well-kept garden was at the rear. Upon the porch, to welcome the new comer, stood a buxom woman whom the man introduced as his wife, "Ellen." Thoroughly in the meshes of the net, what could she do? The elder showed her in, and after vainly trying to clear his throat, said she would soon be showed to the guest chamber, when she could have a quiet day to meditate. In a moment, a palefaced young woman, with a babe at her breast, entered.

"Lena, show Mrs. Rocksbege to the room above," said the man gruffly.

Mrs. Rocksbege followed her, and

once alone, with every door closed, she withdrew to the most retired corner, and then poured out her soul to God for deliverance from the jaws of death.

Soon came the call for dinner. With a throbbing heart she responded, but could not eat, she drank her tea, and tried to appear composed. As soon as possible, excusing herself to go to her room, she cast a pitiful eye upon Lena, and played a moment with her baby, as she passed.

"I love children. If you are very busy I will keep your baby for a while," said Mrs. Rocksbege, as the little one extended its arms to be taken, in happy recognition of the true mother-heart, that so unspeakably yearned for her own dear love of Aida, and all her brother's family. Taking the child, she went to her chamber.

Once more alone she thought: "What a system this is! No words or tongue can describe its horrors. If I ever escape what will I do to make known the depths of this iniquity! Some of these wives,

or concubines, pale, spiritless, very slaves—others bold, loud, talking glibly of the principles they have embraced." Looking out of her window she gazed upon the beautiful valley, and where the rugged peaks stood up, dark and frowning, against the clear sky. No chained captive in his dungeon, was ever more fully cut off from all relief, more closely guarded against escape."

"This baby face! I can kiss it, and it will not betray me," and Mrs. Rocksbege wiped away the forbidden tear, for she must be brave at this juncture.

The saddest day must close, and night throws her pall over all its deeds. Sleep, Mrs. Rocksbege could not—she looked out over the slumbering city, and thought of the hundreds whose motives had been as pure as her own, but who had been ensnared to their destruction by these satanic elders. Surely God could and would "deliver" her "from the hand of all her enemies," and she whispered to herself: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;

and though the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." A calm fell upon her troubled spirit, and she added: "Yes, I have His promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, and—she slowly added—I will trust Him in the deepest darkness.

Men talk of courage to face death! it is nothing compared to that sometimes required to face life!

The elder was away much of the time, and when there had little to say to Mrs. Rocksbege, but as day followed day, she found many opportunities to help, and to observe in this house of many wives.

Tim was a little orphan waif, who did stray jobs for anybody, and was often about these premises to gather up the crumbs and anything he could find. More frequently he received cuffs and harsh words than bread or smiles.

Mrs. Rocksbege determined, if possible, to make friends with this lonely boy, so one day she offered to mend his ciothes and asked him to her room. Her gentle, motherly way won the lad, and she scon felt that in him she might find an agent to secure her escape, unless her plan should be discovered and he disappear entirely. A few days passed. Tim coming every morning to see if he could do anything for his new, and would-be friend. Mrs. Rocksbege was careful to always have her door wide open, or at least broadly ajar, for she had learned that she even now was in the same city where her brother lived, although her environments were so different, she would not have known it, had not Lena chanced to refer to --street and wish she could see a certain "show," of which Mrs. Rocksbege knew.

This day, she gave Tim a bag of marbles, which she had intended for her pupils, and being alone that moment with him, she whispered:

"Do you hear any news on the street? any inquiries being made?" Then casting a furtive glance to be very sure nobody was near, she added: "Don't ask any questions, but listen to everything and tell me as you can. Don't betray me."

"All right. I'll do my best," said the boy.

With his bag of marbles, Tim went off flying down the street, and up another and around to a third, till he saw a group of policemen, and also a boy whom he knew well, and clapping him on the back said, "Hello! got any marbles? I'll bet you haven't as many as me. Look at this bag full. You can't beat me neither."

"I hain't no marbles," answered his chum. "Dad never gives me nothing. I wanted to go fishin' and he wouldn't give me any hooks, and told me to get out?"

"I struck a big lead. There's a new wife up at the elder's, a mighty nice woman she is, used to be a teacher up in the country, and she gave these to me. She was going to give 'em to her scholars but didn't. I'll lend you some, only

we musn't play for "keeps," and both boys were quickly shooting marbles on the sidewalk.

They had not noticed a larger boy, well-dressed but anxious looking who walked slowly behind them as they chatted along, then stood a moment, uncertain whether to pass, or stop and abruptly ask some questions about this "new wife." His heart throbbed so he could hardly speak. That his mother had given these marbles he was positive, for the "bag" was so familiar to his eyes—she had often filled it as a prize to her boys for good behavior or promptness at the school. What was wisest? The boy must know where his mother was.

"Hello, boys, who beats? Who's got the most? Did you win 'em?" asked the stranger lad.

"No sir-ee," said the younger. "A lady gave 'em to him; he never had no such lot more'n I have."

"Who was so kind?"

"Oh, the elder's new wife. Her name was Rocksbege. I'm going to live with

her some time after she's all married. She's mighty nice—look at that! put a patch on my pants and I wore 'em too, and she sowed up this hole in my sleeve. Nobody ever done that for Tim before."

Tim, at first had chosen the spot near the police that he might overhear their gossip, but had quite forgotten that, being too far away to really hear readily, will he caught the single sentence, "They expect to drive her off round by the cross roads," and looking up, as if listening, a policeman caught his eye, and with a whirl of his club, exclaimed, "Get out of this, blocking up the sidewalk! get out!" and gave the marbles a kick.

Stopping to gather up those treasures, he then ran around the corner, the well-dressed lad rapidly walking in the same direction. Overtaking him in a quiet place, he said to Tim:

"Where is that elder's house? I'll pay you good if you'll tell me sure, and carry a message to her from Ira?"

"Be you the Ira she spoke about?"
"Yes."

"She's on — street in the big adobe house, over the parlor. Guess they're going to spirit her away tomorrow night. Did you hear about them 'cross roads.' I'll tell her in the morning and tell her of you, too."

"O, yes," said Ira. "Come with me now and tell my uncle and sister all about it."

"I dasn't, but you come over early tomorrow, and I guess you'll find her.

"No. You come along with me; will take care of you forever if you'll only show me where my mother is."

Finally Tim followed Ira to his uncle's home with the glad news.

In the adobe house, at the supper table, Lena looked specially weary, while Ellen was wild and boisterous, evidently greatly excitled over something—just what Mrs. Rocksbege could only conjecture. Finally, turning to her, Lena said, "Will you help me a few minutes tonight, the others are so busy. This work must be done and I am too sick to do it."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Rocksbege, taking the baby, and starting for the room above. Lena greatly surprised Mrs. Rocksbege by softly closing the door and slipping the bolt; then whispering, she said:

"Thank God! I've found a chance to speak to you tonight, for if you do what I am sure you are planning to do it will cost you your life. I've known such scenes before, and tried it myself. That elder don't belong here. He's only watching you, and our orders are very strict to guard your escape. Don't try to run away, but get some word quickly as possible to your friends. Use Tim: nobody ever suspects him; he's hanging around every where like a hungry dog, but he loves you. I can see that. Have your folks rescue tomorrow from here. It will probably cost the boy's life, but he's nobody anyhow, and perhaps mine if they find out I told you; but I don't Lose no time when he comes tomorrow, for the elder has his plan, and soon an order will come to execute it.

Oh, no words can tell how I suffer in this life. How could I have been induced to leave my southern mountain home for this 'Jerusalem?' Good-bye, my 'work' is done. I'll go below now," and she quietly slipped out.

That long evening was spent in wrest-ling prayer—like Jacob she met the angel, and would not let him go except he bless her. As one star and another appeared, she wondered if Aida and Ira could long to see her as she to see them—was this night to be her last before her release, or before a plunge into some still unknown abyss of evil—some "endowment house"—and again she prayed so earnestly for deliverance. . .

At Mr. Norton's all was commotion. Tim told all he knew, and the manner of the boy was assuring of his truthfulness. Anyway they must try. The rescue must be that night at the midnight hour, when sleep is deepest. Aida said carriages must be ready—Mr. Weller's and their own. Tim, Ira and her uncle should take the two-seated close rig, and

she and Mr. Weller would go in the other —they would be armed if needful—but surely a familiar voice at her mother's window would awaken her, and she could at least leap for life. The hour came, the rigs were ready and the party started by different ways to meet at a certain corner, then to drive quietly to the place. Never did company rely more upon the blessing of heaven than did this. As they left her aunt, Aida commented: "He has said, 'I will guide thee with mine eye,' and He will." Arriving at the adobe house Mr. Norton, Mr. Weller and Aida carefully entered the enclosure, and beneath her window Mr. Norton said:

"Mary."

"Mother," said Aida, and in a moment her form appeared at the open window. "Jump," said Aida, "jump and I'll catch you."

Mr. Norton stepped quickly beneath to catch his sister in his strong arms, but the leap was beyond and Aida's loving arms were the first to receive her mother. Severely injured by the fall, Mr. Norton instantly picked up his sister and with Mr. Weller's help all were out of the yard and driving off at rapid speed before the inmates of the "house" had hardly wakened to the situation.

"Oh, Mother," said Ira, "How good God is to save you to us. Aida and I have prayed all the time for you. I knew she would save you some way. The angels told me so, but they sent Tim and not the little girl you used to help so much to lead you."

CHAPTER XII.

THE REUNION AND SEPARATION.

That night the joy of the Norton household knew no limit and Tim, for the first time in his life, was the hero of the hour, and they all promised that he should henceforth be well cared for, and that it would be better for him to go east, and be placed at school. would attend to his expenses, and select a good family school. Mrs. Rocksbege, in her fall had sprained her ankle and knee quite badly, and to lessen the pain, they quickly applied hot water and arnica, till she was easy, but physical pain was nothing to her in this hour of her freedom and of her union with her own dear ones. All hearts were so full they could scarcely speak to each other of the scenes of the night. Peter's release from prison was not a greater surprise to him, than was Mrs. Rocksbege's to her.

The morning of Aida's departure for Utah arrived ere long, the vacation was nearly closed and her school building required some attention. She was glad to leave yet sad, for their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Norton would remain thereand now they were all bound together so closely, she could not bear the thought. She must manage to get them back east soon, for trouble would certainly grow, sooner or later, to them, for all these experiences. There were needy home mission churches near Mrs. Rocksbege. Surely they would try to find an opening worthy the man, then the sister and brother could meet frequently, and Ira have his uncle's advice as needed.

Previous to this greatest trial of their lives the influence of this pastor's home had been wonderfully sweet to Aida. As she realized what two people, devoted to each other and to Christ had accomplished, could accomplish, her

own heart turned in sorrow to Duane Leeland. He was struggling on alone far away, and she would soon be, alone, and each doing the duty which God seemed to assign. Did she read Providence correctly? How far did man's opinion interfere in that providence? Did her faith hesitate? Almost, yet, she did feel she was doing right and the end would reveal it so, therefore she would courageously go forward. God would care for His own.

With full hearts they bade farewell, and as the homeward journey was begun, Aida almost feared to travel without an escort for some distance, lest some mesh of the old net of Latter Day Saints might still ensnare them, but on and on they safely sped and danger was passed. Nothing specially eventful occurred and the mother, son and sister fully rested in each other's love. At St. Louis they parted for the year—Mrs. Rosksbege and Ira going to their own home and Aida to N. to arrange for her school.

Her ample means now made it possible for her to accomplish much that she longed to do for the dark race, and to their interests she would devote herself afresh.

Dusk was falling over the landscape as she neared her journey's end, and the lights in the city began to twinkle in the distance. Passengers bustled about gathering bundles and packages, donning outside wraps and anxiously peering here and there lest, perchance, something was forgotten. The brakeman hurried through the car, while the baggage porter solicited patronage. Following the general impulse, Aida arose and gathered her belongings, but with a curious sinking in her heart, as thought of the cold welcome at the boarding house when she would find supper waiting, in response to her telegram announcing her return.

Her mind reverted to the dear friends whom she had left; tears filled her eyes, as she arose and followed the jostling crowd to the outside. "I beg your pardon! Is this Miss Rosksbege?" said a voice at Aida's side, a hand at the same time grasping hers in a hearty fashion.

Startled from her sad thoughts, she looked and saw with pleasure and surprise Judge Shirley, her aunt's lawyer and life-long friend, and now her executior.

"I went to your boarding place," said he, "and learned that you were expected on this train, so determined to come and meet you."

"That was such a kind thought," said Aida. "You cannot know how much I appreciate it."

They went through the crowded station, and at Aida's request, walked to her boarding place. As they passed along the streets, many dusky faces lighted up at sight of her, many hats were lifted, and all were delighted to see their teacher, friend and benefactor.

"I doan thought you nebber comin' back, Miss Aida," said one.

"We did miss you powerful," said an-

other. Many expressions of joy greeted her ears.

Judge Shirley said, leaving her at her door: "I came to the city principally on business connected with your estate, and as my time is limited, may I call later, this evening?"

Not long after Aida received him, before a glowing fire in the sitting room, for the nights were chilly. Business matters being satisfactorily settled, Judge Shirley said abruptly:

"Miss Aida, may I say to you what I have in my mind?"—then added: "As your aunt's legal advisor and friend, as well as for your own personal worth, I am greatly interested in your welfare, and feel that I should fail in duty, did I not tell you what my heart bids me say."

"Yes," said Aida. "Your advice on any subject is valuable. I am a willing listener."

"Let me ask," said the judge, "Do you fully realize the magnitude of what you have undertaken to do? Have you fully considered all the points in the case?"

"Perhaps not," said Aida, "I think we have funds enough to carry out our plans by economy, and my heart is very fully in the work. I am really alone in the world, and have no one to consult with especially in the matter."

"That is just it," burst forth the judge. "You are alone. Had you a father, I should not say this—but I am southern born and bred. My large business and constant contact with people of all classes and conditions has made me less conservative than most of my neighbors. Have you considered the prejudice toward you, felt by the better class of people—your natural associates? Have you decided to be ostracized, ignored, perhaps shunned by your own class, if you again take up this work?"

"I have already been through that," said Aida.

"If you go on you will be considered but little better than the negro himself."

Aida gazed at him with a steady, earnest look in her great eyes.

"My dear child, I recognize your sincerity and goodness of heart in taking up this burden, but, can you not be content to give only of your means? Had I a lovely daughter like you, would I allow her to be her own destructor, socially speaking? My child, you are facing a wall of prejudice. You cannot overcome it. Can you endure it? O. my child, give of your abundant means, but come, grace my home by your pres-My wife and I will give you a ence. daughter's place. You shall have all the enjoyment that wealth and position can give;" then playfully, knows what a brilliant match you may be destined to make, with your beauty. your rare voice and all your accomplishments. Besides, all your presence would cheer our two lonely hearts."

Much more he said, then rising, gave Aida his hand for good night, adding: "Think on this well, and before I leave the city tomorrow, I will call for your answer."

Oh! Had she not been wronging

herself, been overscrupulous! What. need hinder this triumphant cause, as sketched by the judge; she could be a reigning belle admired and counted by people in highest positions, and she knew she would be if at his home. Then Duane. Yes, it needed a word for her to bring him to her as quickly as steam could convey him. Mechanically, she raised her hand to her throat to grasp the locket, as she often did, when settling any question of duty, and suddenly her air castle fell to dust. That precious locket, her father, the secret sorrow of his life and hers. How it came surging back with overwhelming force! The happy smile died out on her lip, and she sank upon her knees, her head bowed by sorrow. For a long time silence reigned, at last she prayed:

"Father, forgive! that I was for one moment dazzled by thoughts of earthly joy and ambition. They are not for such as I. Father, my life is thine, consecrated to thy service by ties which Thou alone dost know. As thou didst

bear thy cross for me, help me to bear thy cross for thy sake and thy people's."

When Judge Shirley called next day for his answer Aida said: "Thank you earnestly for your tempting offer, but my work is among this people. I fear not the future."

There was a peace upon her face the judge could not understand—he only looked and tried to fathom it.

"I surely may take a deep interest in all you do, and shall be glad to call whenever I am in town. God bless you and your work!" and the judge went out.

CHAPTER 13.

After writing to Ira and taking a few hour's rest, Aida felt that she must begin to pick up the tangled threads of life. She had scarcely unpacked her trunk, when the expressman called with a small package from Utah. Receipting for it, before looking at it, she supposed it was from her uncle, but lo! she saw the familiar chirography of Duane Leeland. Her heart bounded. Was he in Utah! Nervously cutting the cord, she gave the paper a twitch, when out dropped a letter and a small jewel box, addressed by her dear Duane's hand. She read:

My Dearest Aida: My life has been a desolate one without you. I could not longer stay abroad, and knowing my sister was visiting in Utah, and about to return home, I was impelled by some unseen but irresitible influence to seek again my native land. I had also strange

impressions of great trial to you, in which I should bear a part, but I had no idea of you, yourself, being in Utah. I arrived there the day before you left. The town was alive with the strange history of your mother's rescue and the sudden disappearance of Tim, whom you so promptly entered at Park college. Words are powerless to express my regret, that I, too, could not have aided you faithfully in that search, but we will soon meet, and talk of it all. Soon after arriving here, I went to my sister's room, and finding her out, I spied, within her bureau drawer, a little case, which I recognized instantly as yours. How she came by it I know not, but I do know its value is unspeakable to you, and I simply slipped it into my pocket to make sure of its safety. Dare I say how much I wanted to open it! The temptation was almost irresistible, for I long to know your reason why our lives may not move on as one in this world, but my intense love for you prevailed. speed the case to you unopened. In a

few days my sister and I will return to N., and then, O, then to see you once more!" Affectionately, DUANE.

Poor Aida! she laughed and she cried, she kissed the letter and kissed the case, she was too happy for expression, her father's gift her one keepsake recovered, and,—Duane! surely he was the light of her life, to have again his advice and encouragement in her work was worth so much to her. God had been so kind, so true to His promises. She could never, never doubt His faithfulness. Selecting a strong cord as a temporary guard, she hung the case about her neck, and felt she was herself once more.

Her duties had been so heavy the previous year, many finishing touches to the building were yet ungiven. The music and art rooms were all incomplete, but the pupils had met regularly in chapel for vocal music, sight-reading proving a very recreation. Naturally observant and imitative, and Aida's voice being so clear, sweet and full, and her control of it so complete, her pupils quickly caught her method of breathing, and their voices, always so penetrating and pathetic, developed a new strength and sweetness, which greatly encouraged Aida. If these young people, at their own homes, would substitute the pure, elevating songs of the chapel for the low doggered of the streets, who could tell the purifying effect upon every listener. She had always instructed them in writing, and not a few had developed special facility, even at pen drawing, —were really "embryo artists."

In their homes there were few or no books, and while every student was happy to prepare an assigned "lesson" of any length, and would cheerfully look up "references" when directed—because it was "the lesson," few had reached the plain where they enjoyed reading for its own sake, and the Library had been selected with special reference to this need. Aida watched with pleasure the manifest influence upon nearly every pupil. To give free play to their imaginations, and to teach

them language, she often placed, before the school, some large picture with various salient points in it, and required an essay from every pupil upon it. This exericse was a general favorite, and often pupils would write two or more wholly different stories from the same illustration. Would any novelist ever arise, from her school, to startle the land?

One day, after classes had been dismissed from chapel, Aida sat alone upon the platform in a contemplative mood. The electrical sweetness of their voices. singing in perfect time, and with rare expression, "Lead, Kindly Light" had thrilled her, till her heart responded to the Invisible Presence. As her large, humid eyes turned their orbs heavenward, a little girl stopped, half way up the aisle, and in hushed admiration, waited a signal to advance and deliver the morning mail. Entranced, she still stood, for Miss Aida's eyes were penetrating the ethereal blue, and her ears waiting some heavenly message. Finally

noting the presence of the child, she said: "Come, Fanny. Have you the mail today?"

"Yes, ma'm, but was you way off in heabben? You looked like you was an angel, so lovely I didn't want you to stir. It's nice for us to see angels here, and for you to see God."

A few words to the waiting lassie and Aida opened her letters. Many were applications to enter the school, inquiries about it, could she take pupils "to work their way?" could she "help 'em some;" they "was powerful anxious to come but hadn't much money; Pap was dead, and mamma had a big family." One letter, no more determined than the others, struck her especially, for it voiced so earnestly the desire in thousands of hearts for an education. It commenced:

"To —— Seminary, to you all, if there is any chance of me getting in there to school on the first of Nov., the next month or coming, I am a poor girl, and I want to work my way, I can pay

a money perhaps. My mother is a widow woman and she is not able to send me as I wish to come, but will you please make room for me, if it is possi-Do please let me in the first of next month, if you please. I was raised up coractly, but I am poor, and will you please make room for me, and I will come on the first of the mo. and work my time out. My desire is to work my way as long as I can stay there. Please send me word right away whether I can come or not. My father has been dead for several years, and my mother is a wider and she is not able to school me and I want to try to work and school myself if I can. I haven seen any catalogue. I don't know what the fair is. Will you please send me word what I can do, for the Lord's sake please make room for me if possible. Write back to me and tell me when I can come in, and how long I can stay and tell me all fair for going there to school. Please send me good incoragement for coming. will close whenever you send word to come, so please answer soon.

M. D. H.

She wished she could say "yes, come," to all such, but the school was, especially in the boarding department, to raise up leaders, and only the best could be accepted. She would investigate this one.

She wished some factory might be connected with the school—a broom factory perhaps. The boys could raise the corn, and boys and girls make the brooms. Could she dispose well of the goods? Something she must devise, that more of the deserving could help themselves to an education.

She read other letters; one from a girl whom, for several years, she had faithfully trained, sure of good results to the race through her influence. Noting its beautiful chirography, perfect spelling, and well constructed sentences, she unconsciously contrasted the two, and mentally exclaimed, "Yes, what may not an education do for these people!"

"To send out one such missionary is worth the labor of my life, but there are so many, many, as efficient, who are letting their lights 'shine for Jesus.'" Her assistant principal, Miss B., passing that moment, Aida called: "Miss B., a letter from Mary McL. Will you listen? "Certainly," and Aida read:

My Dear Friend: I am glad to write you tonight. I often think of you and wish to hear, but I know the many things that claim your attention. It would be imposing to write often. expecting to get an answer. I do feel very thankful to you for taking H., and I hope her training may fit her for much service for our people. I am teaching now in R. R.. and oh, the work I find here to do, I shan't try to tell. I am trying to do something for the Master, I have hopes of doing some good as all seem anxious. I hold Bible class with the old people once a week. We have a small Sunday school, but no literature, not one Bible or anything, except a few quarterlies. How glad I would be to have some Sundayschool papers for the children, as they do so much good in getting them to come to Sunday-school. I shall find any papers you have to spare of much

use, and the Lord knows just how thankful I will be, I hope you will send me something, for I shall never cease to thank God for the religious training I got in those blessed walls. And especially that from the Bible, what I know in Bible means the whole success of my life, and I do thank God, you and the North of such blessed gifts. It fills my heart to overflow with thanks just to think of it. The Lord only knows how I crave and wish for just two more years there, if no more. But it seems it will never be. I have hoped and waited for a change in my condition until I have despaired. If I don't see my way out this year, I shall give up all, and not try to come back any more. Your Devoted Pupil.

Another very hastily written note was for a girl, Mary N., whose mother Aida had often befriended, and who had most zealously saved every penny to educate her family of four. All were now sick, and would Miss Aida please come to see them, and, if possible bring a nurse,

for they were so ill. That afternoon Aida went to the little cabin and there found the mother with the baby and oldest daughter, Sal, very sick in one bed, and near by, on the cot, was Jim, a lad of seventeen, while Mary, a girl of fourteen, was trying to care for them all. The poor mother raised her eyes and seeing Aida almost creid for joy,-then "We's powerful glad to said: O, we's awful sick see you. and such a backache and headache, seemed like we would die sure! and dem chills, dev ain't like de ordinary chills, and we vomited so hard! I thought we'd all be better after dat, but ma'm, we ain't, none of us. Jes see what nasty tongues we has, so white, and so red on the edges. The baby seems easier, but we can't, none of us, hardly drink water, but we has to drink all de Jim, dar, he's been talkin' all time. kinds o' nonsense, he's out o' his head. Miss Aida. O, Miss Aida, can't you tell us what to do? You's been such a sweet angel to me, I felt like jes' to see you would make us most well," and her red eyes fairly shone in their feverish brilliancy. Then she continued:

"Pray for us, my mouth is so dry I can't speak widout wetting it wid dis yer rag ,but my head's clear. Bress de Lor for dat! Sal's had fits; yes, fits right yere beside me, and the baby, too. Do help us, Miss Aida."

Aida had never seen such cases before, but she was sure it was yellow fever. What should she do? It must be reported. She dared not go back to her own school lest she convey the fatal germs to all that company. What should Momentous possibilities are she do? cften crowded into a few brief moments. Aida lifted her eyes to God in fervent, unspoken supplication—never had she been so overwhelmed with her absolute helplessness. Would she stay and care for these four, and the fifth who was rapidly sickening, and so restrict it to this household and herself?or, what should she do? "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire," and she did so unspeakably desire to know her duty. The sallow angel of the dark flood surely hovered near, and baby and Sal were not long for this world, if indeed the mother and Jim could be saved. She quickly went to the authorities and reported the case, asking that somebody be sent. She would return and keep "quarantine" until the nurse could come.

"Will you?" earnestly asked the member of the Board of Health, "will you? It means death to you, if you do."

"It may, but I'm there, and know how to restrict it, if anybody does. You simply go to my school and tell Miss B. to manage it the best she possibly can, till farther plans are made. God's providence took me to this lowly family, and I will not forsake them. Good bye, be quick, please."

As Aida returned she felt within herself a fearful consciousness that in her own depleted condition after the nervous excitement of her mother's experiences, that she was a fit subject for this dreadful contagion, but she could trust. The news of "yellow fever" spread like wild-fire and no money could hire a nurse to care for the stricken household. "The 'nigger teacher' was there and could stay better than anybody else."

Time seems long and the days endless, when alone with such a grim messenger. There was a little cook-house outside, and this Aida determined to prepare, as quickly as she could, that, if she, herself, should be stricken, she could lie there, and not in this cabin with all the others, should they convalesce. Nothing should be left to the last that could be attended to now. Suiting the action to the word, Aida made due preparation, as best she could. The doctor pronounced the case thorough yellow fever. Two surely must die, and very soon, for they were in the last collapse. Stepping again to the baby, he found it gone already. Sal's black vomit had lessened, but, while they talked, the last spasm came, and she, too, had died. Mary and Aida could only lay the two

sickening forms upon the floor. The doctor offered no assistance, indeed was so dazed by the suddenness and violence of the cases, he could scarcely control his judgment. Coffins must be sent, and the bodies removed speedily, the "city" must do that. Aida told him in full her plan for herself, if stricken, to occupy the cook-house and requested him to bring her some supplies.

Soon two colored men came with coffins, and a third-a white man-none other than Duane Leeland! Seeing him, Aida bounded to the door, declaring he must not come in; no, not for anything! But he was already there, with a quantity of supplies, for the doctor had spoken freely of Miss Rocksbege's wonderful plans and composure in case she should be stricken, and he was determined now to stay with her; if they died, they would die together; if either sickened, the other should be most assiduously cared for. Duane and Aida were to be the "nurses," etc., of this desolate family.

Days passed. The mother slowly convalesced. Jim's strong constitution was surely carrying him through, and Mary's attack was light. Scarcely eight days had lapsed, when Aida was sure she was a victim. Her bloodshot eyes and quick pulse also betrayed it to Duane. That it was to be no slight affair was evident, and Aida already heard the angels calling. Fearing she soon might not be able to talk coherently, and wishing supremely to commit her school, with all its possibilities to Duane, and to fulfill her promise as to the secret of her life, she would do it now. Calling Duane to her, as she felt the deadly throes of the fever, she said:

"My precious friend, individuals die, but institutions live. To you, and to mother, and Ira, I commit this new Seminary. May its influence never waver from the strictest Bible standards. As you have been so faithful to me and it, thus far, you will continue so to be. It is the work of my life to upbuild that people and it will be not less your life's work."

"My promise must be fulfilled, and that you may know better the reason of my course, let me tell you now. Don't think less of my precious father, but labor harder for the upbuilding of these needy ones, in truest morality and heart Christianity. When my father was a young man, he frequently saw a young slave on a neighboring plantation; she was so lovely, so sweet in her disposition, and so earnest in her desires to learn, he was greatly drawn to her, and sought occasion to have her aid him in various ways, his own object being to instruct her all he could, without calling forth the law. As she learned of books, and revelled in the real beauties of poetic fancy, she revealed to him the unalloyed loveliness of a true soul. She was the child of a "quadroon," but he really loved her, and notwithstanding her dark hair and eyes, she was so fair. he believed her race contamination could not be discovered by any who did not know her. Circumstances aided his designs, and ere long he was to be sent

abroad by his father to manage an extensive business operation. He determined to secretly marry this girl, knowing well the law forbidding the intermarriage of the races in the south. The girl hesitated long, actually refused, when he asked her hand in this way. but was finally persuaded. They went to a distant town where my father had a friend, and by him they were married, the friend not fully comprehending his own deed, and immediately they sailed for the Continent. Her master, missing his slave, was about to set the bloodhounds upon her trail, when a check for \$1,000 from some unknown party was received as 'payment for Lucinda,' and the matter was dropped. In many parts of the south this was often done when a slave was spirited off by another master, and, later, the ransom was received.

"My father was very proud of his wife's beauty, natural grace and lovely heart. She was his untiring theme. He would make their home in Europe, and

only the Omniscient would know the race tincture. One day, in Florence, the young wife proposed giving a pleasant surprise to her husband. She had, from a famous art studio, secured her picture, and, with a merry joy sparkling in her eye, she handed it to him, as they stood upon the beautiful banks of the Arno. She expected an expression of extravagant praise, but, as he gazed at it, the love-light fled, a dark shadow spread over his countenance, and with a look of horror, he hurled it from him into the sluggish waters of the Arno, and quickly, silently, walked up the bank. He did not see his wife's bewilderment and disappointment. She could not interpret his action, it was so new and strange to That picture had been a revelation to him. As he gazed at the miniature face, notwithstanding the high, full forehead, delicate lips and dainty chin of the Anglo-Saxon, there was the unmistakable stamp of the African race. The penetrating light of heaven will not lie, and nature's laws are unchangeable.

Framed by Divinity, and developed by heaven's sunlight the innate characteristics of a human being must reveal thmeselves. The shock was so great to his sensitive nerves, that he dropped all and left abruptly, lest his wife should know his inmost thought. He never explained his action to her, but endeovcred to show his sincerest love by greater attention. In a few months I was born, to the great joy of my parents, but to me was granted a mother's love but a few days, when my mother was called up higher, and I left alone with my father. In looking over her effects. my father found a duplicate of the picture that had given such joy and sad-This was now most precious to him, but he resolved never to let me know he had it, for I was to be brought up as the daughter of a wealthy, white gentleman. His relatives in the United United States, except Aunt Vincent, er States, except Aunt Vincent, never knew the conditions of his marriage, and now only knew of my birth and my

mother's death. To place this sweet face in a form more serviceable to him, he purchased a most exquisite bit of onyx marble, a portion from a vase used in the time of Savanarolla for holy water in the cathedral of St. Mark. this pure, white stone, with its sacred memories, he had painted in fadeless water color, the image of her whom he This sacred bit, hallowed had loved. by the martyrdom of a saint, effected him strangely, and the beads of water, that had dripped from its edge, seemed to touch his heart like the tears of his wife, as she looked with astonishment, when the first picture sank in the liquid In this beautiful case is the depths. face of my mother. He always wore this concealed upon his heart, and even I never suspected its presence.

Returning to America, no one ever knew his secret, save Aunt Vincent, and myself. When I was just ready to graduate from college, an attack of typhoid fever nearly cost my life. My father was over me constantly, and with Aunt Vincent cared for me. All hope was gone, and in my wild delirium, my mind turned upon my "angel mother," as father always called her. Would I know her? Would she meet me? Was he sure I would know her? This nearly drove my father wild, for, in his heart, he ever felt himself open to the law, and finally, when but a few hour's of earth were left for me at most, to relieve his own heart, and check my mania for my mother, he took this case, and opening it said: Dearest Aida, here is your mother, yes, you will know her.'

"My eye fell upon a picture, but to my highly wrought nerves, only the African traits were visible, and I screamed out:
'Am I a nigger? Am I a nigger? Am I kin to a nigger!' and swooned, but the very shock was what my system needed to bring me back to life. My father had told Aunt Vincent the full story at the time he contemplated marrying again, and we three vowed it should go no farther. But, for my own life. From that hour of weakness, my life was

changed. I was 'colored,' my duty was to my own race. My associations had been such there could be no companionship, but a race sympathy, a race pride awoke, and this has been the key of my later life.

"At the time my father decided to marry Ira's mother, Aunt Vincent begged him to tell his bride, for no secret should be between them, but he could not. Then she said he ought never to marry her, but he did, and this letter was accidentally found by mother a year or so later. To it, and the reticence of my father, was due the fact that Aunt name was never mentioned in my mother's presence.

"The consciousness of my race has ever kept me aloof from my mother's affectionate embrace. I loved her, but feared if she knew me fully she would not love me. I have loved you, Duane, more devotedly than heart can tell, but, conscious of this taint within my blood, I could not marry you. My heart said 'Yes,' my intellect and the law said 'No.'

A double life has been mine, but take this locket, and after I am gone, wear it as a pledge of a love for you untarnished by aught of earth. I thank the dear Lord that He has brought me into this world to work for my downtrodden people in this land of liberty. When the green earth opens its arms to receive your body, as she will soon to accept mine, our spirits will be joined in the skies. Then will we each receive the 'new name,' neither yours nor mine, but 'which no man knoweth saving he that Till then, let this 'case' receiveth it.' be the pledge of our love. Please open it, that we may, together, behold the face of my 'angel mother.' "

Kissing the picture, Aida passed the case to her lover, who pressed it to his lips, at the same time clasping her hand to his bosom, in a loving pledge stronger than life itself.

Aida's sufferings were becoming more and more exquisite. She seemed to have power given her for this great effort, and then to sink, as one stage of the disease rapidly followed another, only a few short hours elapsing ere the angels came and bore her spirit hence.

Overwhelmed with grief, Duane was determined that, at least, Aida should have a gentle loving burial, and with his own hands, he now prepared her for her narrow house, and saw her tenderly laid away. He had sent telegrams to the loving mother and brother at frequent intervals, and now told them the sad end, but the secret of her life was with him alone. Not neglectful of this suffering family, and finding that he was not likely to have the fever, after fumigating as fully as possible and taking every precaution, he, at length, returned to the world. The main object of his life now was to complete, as fully as possible, the work of her whose life had been dearer to him than his own.

Years pass. The sunny south is dotted all over with thrifty villages and cheery dwellings of the educated and christianized colored people. There is scarcely a large district where the little

church and the school-house may not be A race pride has been engenfound. The desire to mix with dered. imitate the 'whites' is dying out. The imitation of Christ, and His teachings, and the establishment of true homes is paramount. To represent a race useful. honorable, intelligent. Christian, the glory of the south is their ambition. The center of learning and Christian influence for a large section is in the colleges at N-, known as the "Rocksbege University," in memory of its founder.

About a mile out of town, on the banks of the beautiful river is the plantation home of the President of the Board of Trustees of the Rocksbege university. A gentleman was basking in the setting sun, one autumn evening and his wife sat reading a little poem from their cousin Phil and his wife, Alice, who were missionaries in Japan, while their five merry children romped in happy play upon the lawn. Presently a joyous shout went up: "Here comes Uncle Duane and

Grandma!" and the advancing couple were led by the children to a seat on the lawn and affectionately greeted by Ira Rocksbege and his wife—his former playmate—Grace Harvey.

"Uncle Duame," cried Clifford, "Lucile says you are not our uncle! You are, ain't you?"

"Why does she say that?" asked Duane Leeland.

"Because you are not our father's brother, nor our mother's brother," responded Clifford.

"Do you remember what the Savior replied when told that his "mother and brethren were without?" asked the old bachelor.

Mrs. Rocksbege repeated: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

"Then I know you are our uncle," persisted Clifford.

Nestling in his grandmother's lap, with his big brown eyes looking up into her saintly face, while he coyed with the two little curls on either side, that clung as a halo of light, a younger boy said: "But the Bible doesn't say that everybody is our grandmother, does it?"

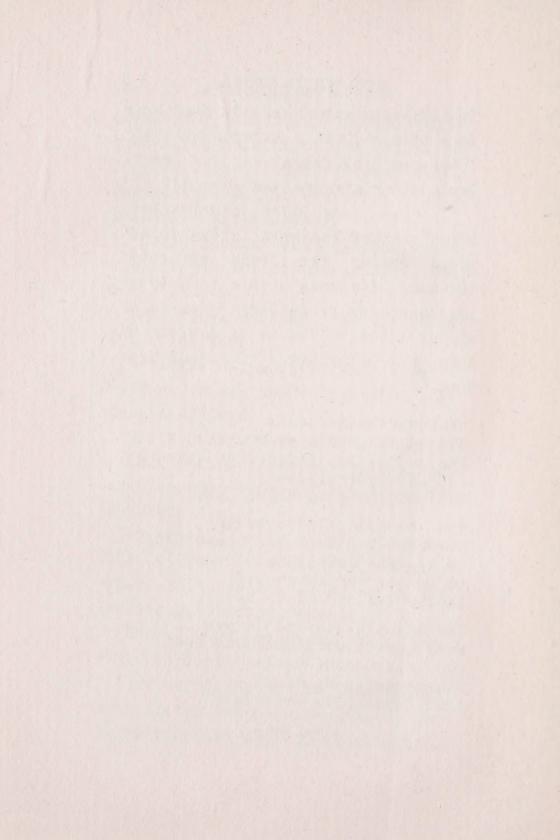
"I, alone, am your grandmother, Paul," replied the lady. "God is our great Father and Jesus our elder brother. He came to this world to be an example to us. He came 'to seek and save the lost,'—"not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Let us follow him."

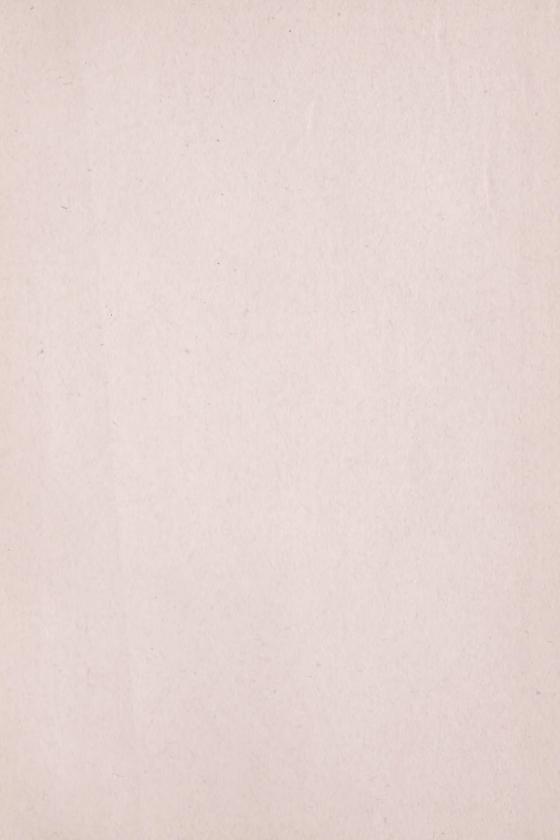
"It is not the deed we do
Though the deed be never so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with lowly care
In the heart of the deed so fair.

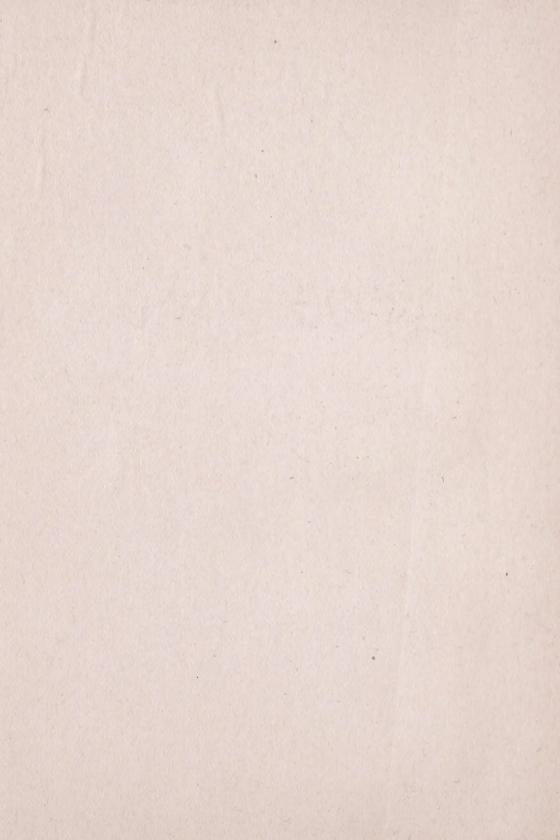
The love is the priceless thing,
The treasure our treasures must hold,
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,
Or tell the worth of the gold
By the love that cannot be told.

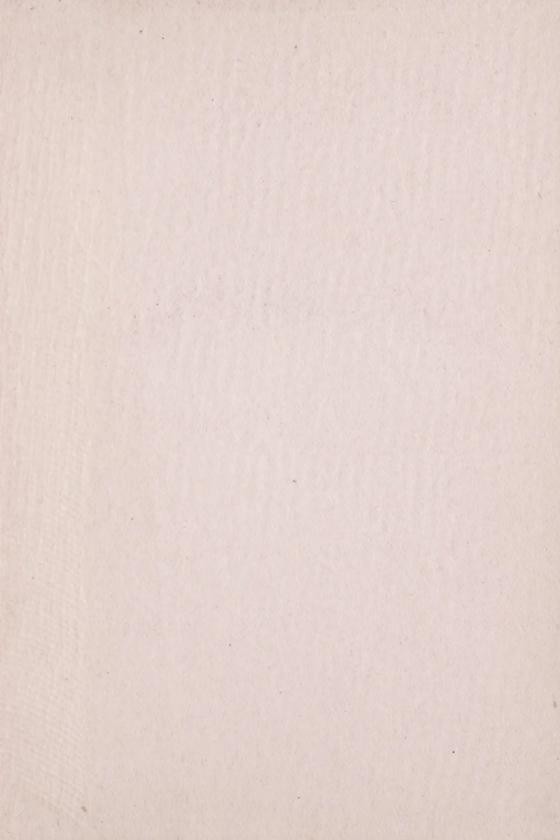
Behold us, the rich and the poor, Dear Lord in thy service draw near: One consecrateth a coin, One droppeth only a tear; Look, Master, the love is here."

(The End.)









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